Hafa Adai!

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, rate your level of confidence in President-elect Barack Obama's ability to revive the flagging U.S. economy.

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

112 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Cease-Fire

Israeli troops began to withdraw from Gaza Sunday after their government and Hamas militants declared an end to a three-week war.

WORLD...Page 16

DC Concert

Under the gaze of Abraham Lincoln's imposing statue, Bruce Springsteen belted out "Come on up for the rising."

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

Fish and Wildlife gets control of marine monuments. **PAGE 2**
Kilili: NMI must adjust to loss of markets for now. **PAGE 3**

'A new perspective for Americans'

A student holds a banner with a photo of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during a civil rights mini-march yesterday in Garapan as part of the CNMI's 3rd commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Inset, civil rights activist MarshaRose Joyner shares her early experiences on Saipan as an 8-year old girl during the closing years of World War II from 1946 to 1949.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The installation today of Barack Obama as the first black President of the United States presents a new perspective for American society, according to civil rights activist MarshaRose Joyner.

See A NEW on Page 4

Doromal threatens Cruz with defamation lawsuit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Human rights advocate Wendy L. Doromal, through a lawyer, has threatened to sue Taotao Tano and its president, Gregorio Cruz Jr., if they do not stop issuing allegedly defamatory and slanderous statements against her.

Cruz said Doromal and her lawyer, John W. Zielinski, have threatened the wrong person because he is not afraid of lawyers and lawsuits.

Doromal

Cruz

Zielinski wrote Cruz on Friday, de-

See DOROMAL on Page 4

NMI officials witness Obama inauguration

RELATED NEWS

- 'Anything possible,' Obama tells joyous crowd. **PAGE 15**
- Obamas, Bidens enjoy Lincoln Memorial concert. **PAGE 18**
- Obama illustration finds place at Portrait Gallery. **PAGE 19**

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Officials from the CNMI will be among the one million expected to watch Barack Obama sworn in today as the 44th president of the United States.

Sablan

Gov. Benigno Fitial, Saipan Mayor Juan Tudela, Rep. Tina Sablan and CNMI Rep. Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan will be in attendance at the inauguration. The inauguration events will start around 10am Tuesday

See NMI on Page 4

Local

Fish and Wildlife gets control of marine monuments

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne on Friday expanded the National Wildlife Refuge System by 54 million acres, or 58 percent, by assigning the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the responsibility for overall management of the three new marine national monuments in the Pacific Ocean designated by President Bush earlier this month.

"The National Wildlife Refuge System is the world's largest and most professionally managed system of lands dedicated to wildlife conservation," Kempthorne said. "I can think of no organization more qualified to oversee these pristine areas and their diverse wildlife than the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

Kempthorne

When President Bush designated the new monuments—the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, and Marianas Trench National Monument—he delegated the decision on how the areas would be managed to the Secretary of the Interior.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has extensive experience in the Pacific Ocean. The refuge system already includes a number of refuges in the ocean, including Howland Island, Baker Island, Jarvis Island, Palmyra Atoll, and Kingman Reef National Wildlife Refuges. These refuges are included in the area designated by the president.

"We welcome these new lands and waters into the National Wildlife Refuge System," said Rowan Gould, Fish and Wildlife Service Acting Director. "These unique coral reef ecosystems and active undersea volcanoes, along with the deepest area on Earth -- the Mariana Trench -- well deserve the protections the refuge system will provide."

Some portions of the new monuments will be managed in part by the Commerce Department's National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and in part by Fish and Wildlife Service. These areas will not be part of the Refuge System.

The president's designation of the three monuments prohibits its destruction or extraction of protected resources within their boundaries as well as commercial fishing in the coral reef ecosystem areas of the monuments. Scientific and recreational activities, including recreational fishing, may be permitted consistent with the care and management of the protected resources of these monuments.

In 2007, President Bush designated the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, encompassing 140,000 square miles, the largest single protected marine area in the world, eclipsing Australia's Great Barrier Reef. The four monuments combined are larger than the combined size of the National Park System and the National Wildlife Refuge System as it was prior to the Secretary's decision today.

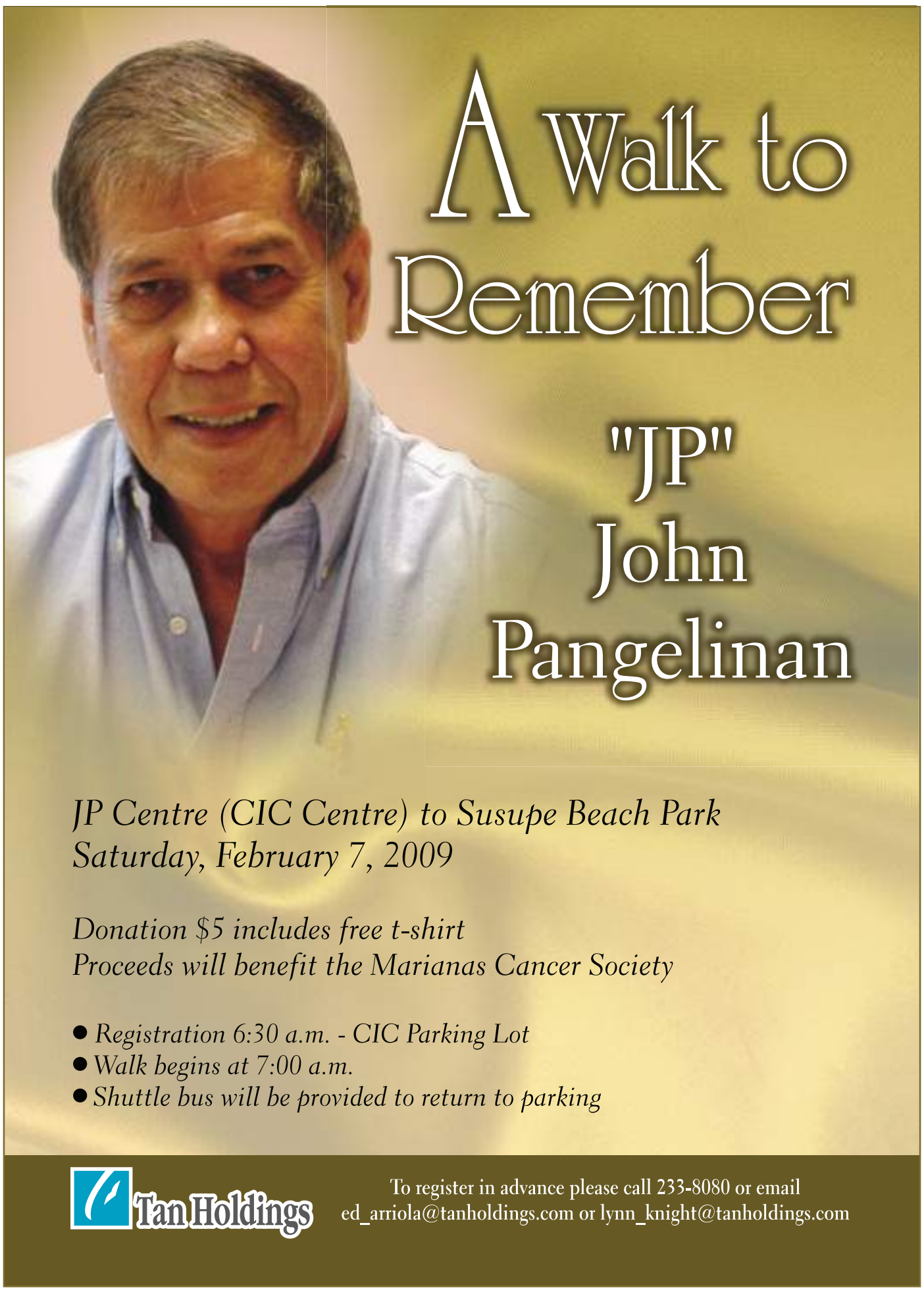
The three monuments designated by the president earlier this month include many rare or unique features. For example, the Mariana Trench includes many unique features, including the only place on Earth with huge active mud volcanoes that release hydrogen. The Champagne vent, located at the Eifuku submarine volcano, produces almost pure liquid carbon dioxide, a phenomenon observed only at one other site in the world.

The molten Sulfur Cauldron found at the Daikoku submarine volcano is unique on Earth; the only other known location of molten sulfur is on Io, a moon of Jupiter. And Maug Crater represents one of only a handful of places on Earth where photosynthesis and chemosynthetic communities of life are known to come together in the same place.

Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands are unique places for climate change and other research at the Equator. They have deep corals, coral reefs and precious corals in near-pristine condition, with predator dominated marine ecosystems where the biomass of top predators exceeds that of the Great Barrier Reef.

Kingman Reef and Palmyra Atoll have undisturbed coral reefs, with the highest levels of coral diversity in the central Pacific. Kingman Reef has the greatest known fish biomass and proportion of apex predators of any coral reef ecosystem that has been scientifically studied in the world.

Johnston Atoll's coral reefs are the origin source for much of the larvae for the Hawaiian Islands for corals, invertebrates and other reef fauna. They have the deepest reef building corals on record. Meanwhile, Wake Island is perhaps the oldest living coral atoll in the world, and has healthy and abundant coral and fish populations. *(DOI)*


A Walk to Remember
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Walk begins at 7:00 a.m.
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Fitial nominates three to the monument advisory council

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno Fitial has submitted his three nominees to serve on the Marianas Monument Advisory Council.

In a letter to James Connaughton, chairman of the Committee on Environmental Quality, Fitial nominated Benigno Magofna Sablan, Joaquin P. Villagomez and Sylvan O. Igisomar.

"I am confident that all three of my appointees will serve honorably, responsibly and admirably in the Mariana Monument Advisory Council," Fitial wrote. "They are truly champions of reasonable, practical and meaningful conservation efforts and practices, and they are committed to sustainable fishing."

Sablan, a recreational fisherman, is a two-term Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council member currently serving his third term. He served three terms in the CNMI House of Representatives and is the former Secretary for the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. He is a licensed boat captain and a fisheries biologist.

Villagomez is the first chief of the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife, where he served for five years. He also served as the administrator of Coastal Resources Management for three years and was a member of WesPac's Advisory Panel on coral reef ecosystems.

Fitial said Villagomez's background gives him a true sense for conservation efforts.

"Because of his past position and rich experience in management, conservation, law enforcement and protection of fisheries and ocean resources, he is fully aware of the need to prevent overfishing, and to conserve marine resources so as not to deplete fish stocks by promoting scientifically determined sustainable fishing," he said.

Igisomar, the current director of DPL's Division of Fish and Wildlife, was recently appointed to serve as a commissioner for the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

The Mariana Monument Advisory Council will provide advice and recommendations on the development of management plans and management of the monument. The other members on the council will include a representative from the Department of Defense and one from the Coast Guard. The nominees would serve for a three-year term.

Kilili: NMI must adjust to loss of markets for now

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Rep. Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan (I-MP) said he is disappointed China and Russia were not included in the new Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver program but he will work with Department of Homeland Security officials to make sure the necessary security measures are in place fully and as quickly as possible.

Last week, the interim final rule for the visa waiver program was published, stating that China and Russia would not be included in the program until additional security measures were achieved. The new visa waiver rules will go into effect June 1, with a possible delay of up to six months. Local officials, business and tourism leaders, and community members expressed disappointment with the decision, saying the exclusion will harm the CNMI's economy during an already difficult period.

Sablan

Sablan said he was also hoping the two countries would be included.

"They are not and this is unfortunate," he said in an e-mail. "I am obviously unhappy with this but I am now looking forward to seeing Homeland Security complete the installation of the necessary security net and other infrastructure so that we will be able to petition for the inclusion of these two countries in the CNMI-Guam only visa waiver program."

Alex Hartman, an immigration policy adviser at DHS who was on island last week, said some of the additional security measures could be electronic travel authorization and biometric entry and exit requirements. The security measures could be in place in 12 to 18 months, at which time, the CNMI could petition to include China and Russia in the waiver program.

Sablan said he would continue to meet with DHS officials and work with the House Natural Resources Committee to receive reports on the status of the improvements.

"We will have to adjust to the loss of China and Russia for some time. But even still, as soon as December we may be able to receive Chinese and Russian tourists under the Visa Waiver Program again, but with even better screening methods than we have now," he said.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection must also set up six ports of entry and exit in the CNMI. The congressman said work could begin as soon as the interim final rules were published; therefore finishing the work sooner than if work was started June 1. The rules were published Friday.

CBP estimates it will incur a cost of approximately $25.8 million to develop the infrastructure and $153,100 per year for port operation and maintenance. An initial $3.7 million will also be incurred for personnel relocation and $7.8 million per year for personnel salary and $5.3 million per year for associated temporary costs, for a total of $87.3 million to $91.7 million, depending on discount rates.

The Guam-CNMI visa-waiver program will allow citizens of the following countries to enter Guam and the CNMI without a visa for up to 45 days: Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, United Kingdom, and Hong Kong. The visa-waiver program is part of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008, signed into law by President Bush last May.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signs a proclamation Thursday last week to declare January as NMI Crime Stoppers Month, as Lt. Gov. Tim Villagomez, seated beside Fitial, Crime Stoppers president, Jim Arenovski, rightmost, and press secretary Charles Reyes look on.

Lack of funding stymies Crime Stoppers program

The NMI Crime Stoppers Program has stopped featuring "Crime of the Week" stories on local TV due to a severe lack of funding, according to the program's president, Jim Arenovski.

"We don't have the 'Crime of the Week' [segment] anymore on TV. It's a disappointment for us," Arenovski said. "It's just that we can no longer fund that program."

The Crime Stoppers Program used to cost $800 a month. The program would air stories of pertinent crimes in the CNMI every Friday on KSPN Channel 2.

"We are looking for the community's help, if the community would like to make donations to help us get that Crime of the Week back on TV every Friday," Arenovski said.

The Crime Stoppers president said that featuring specific crimes on TV made the public aware of certain crimes and helped authorities in solving them.

He said many of the people who call Crime Stoppers to provide information about crimes actually don't call back to get the monetary rewards.

"They just want a conduit to provide that information to get criminals off the street. Maybe the money is not important to them, but [the program] is an important avenue for them to call," Arenovski said.

Since 1989, he said, the program paid less than $10,000 in monetary rewards to tipsters. In 2008, Crime Stoppers reportedly paid only $1,800 to tipsters.

"We don't have many tips that led to arrests in 2008," Arenovski said.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed a proclamation last Thursday declaring January as the NMI Crime Stoppers Program Month. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

DEQ brigade sets COP cleanup

The Division of Environmental Quality cleanup brigade will be picking up trash at Coral Ocean Point (Unai Dangkulo) on Feb. 7.

Thos who would like to volunteer may join the group on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 8am. Volunteers will clean until 10am and break for drinks and then continue, if needed.

This month, outstanding brigade volunteers who participated in at least 10 monthly cleanups will receive a brigade cap and those who participated in at least three cleanups will receive a green brigade t-shirt.

The DEQ cleanup brigade began in 1996 and continues to maintain clean, healthy beaches.

For more information about volunteering, contact the DEQ office at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

Marianas High School schedule

Jan. 29 3rd-4th Period Exams

Jan. 30 1st-2nd Period Exams

Feb. 2 No classes (PSS Professional Development)

Feb. 11 2nd Quarter Report Card Day/Open House, 4pm-6pm (student released at 1pm, parents pick up report cards from Homeroom teachers)

Feb. 16 No classes (President's Day)

Feb. 17 No classes (PSS Professional Development)

Feb. 27 Cultural Day, 9am-3pm MHS Campus, Open to the public

For questions and concerns, contact 237-3206. ***(PR)***

Deadline set for filing quarterly tax returns

The Division of Revenue and Taxation is reminding all CNMI residents that the 2008 4th Quarter deadline for filing the quarterly tax returns is Monday, Feb. 2, 2009. The Division of Revenue and Taxation will be open from 7:30am to 6:30pm on Monday Feb. 2, 2009. The office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation is located at the Joeten DanDan Commercial Center. For more information call 664-1000, 664-1034 Compliance Branch, or 664-1065 Collection Branch. ***(PR)***

Vendors needed for Puengin Inetnon

The Kagman Community Association is looking for interested vendors to sell food, drinks, arts, crafts, clothing, produce, snacks, or other items at Puengin Inetnon. Puengin Inetnon is Chamorro for "A Night of Gathering". Puengin Inetnon will be Kagman's Friday Night Market and will be held every government payday Friday outside the Kagman Community Center. More vendors are needed. Call the Kagman Post Office at 256-POST for more info. ***(PR)***

Attention to families with disabilities on Rota

The Family Hope Center under the CNMI Council for Developmental Disabilities and Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. would like to inform the community that the System Navigators would be traveling to Rota to conduct interviews and follow up(s) with families with disabilities on Jan. 22-23, 2009.

We are encouraging families with disabilities on Rota to contact NMPASI at 234-7273/4 for Frances Torres or Dorian Camacho or CNMI DD Council for Lillian Ada at 664-7005/7000 or cell phone no. 287-5643 for an appointment. ***(PR)***

MLK DAY schedule

Jan. 20 Workshops at schools on Saipan

Jan. 21 "Fulfilling the Dream" Inaugural Celebration Dinner; $15; Bud's Bar; 6pm-8pm. ***(PR)***

A NEW

From Page 1

Joyner, the keynote speaker at the Martin Luther King Day celebration yesterday at the American Memorial Park, said: "President Obama represents a new respect for the American people."

Joyner was also one of the panelists of a forum titled "The Color of Unity, The Pacific Way" at the AMP Visitors Center.

The forum, which was moderated by KUAM producer Sonya Artero, also featured local historian and community leader Rosa Chailang Palacios, Department of Labor Deputy Secretary Cinta M. Kaipat, San Vicente Elementary School vice principal Betty Miller and Kagman High School teacher Ambrose M. Bennett.

Over 50 people of different nationalities attended the forum which, Sam Joyner said, was intended to remind the world, especially among the youth, of Martin Luther King's dream that someday "we would judge a man by the content of his character, not the color of his skin."

After the forum, participants were joined by over 50 students in a Mini March from the American Memorial Park to the north end of Beach Road up to the corner of Winchell's in Garapan and back to the AMP for the main MLK Day ceremonies.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Students and teachers join the members and supporters of the African-American Cultural Preservation Committee at a civil rights mini-march in Garapan as part of the CNMI's third commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day yesterday.

In her keynote address, Joyner recounted that she was born into a family whose fight for black equality and justice goes back more than 140 years.

Joyner first visited Saipan as an 8-year-old girl during the last days of World War II and, despite the turbulent and chaotic events of that period, she has fond memories of climbing the fence around the Camp Susupe Detention Center and sneaking in to play with the children living within the compound.

This is the first time that she has returned to Saipan since her first visit in 1946 and she shared her unique memories and perspectives of that period.

The Murphy-Oliver family, of which Marsha was the oldest child of the seventh generation, has owned newspapers for 110 years. At one time, they owned the largest chain of black newspapers in the world, championing the cause of civil rights.

Her great-granduncle, John Oliver was born a slave, became an attorney and was on the grand jury that indicted Jefferson Davis (President of the Confederate States) for treason in May 1866.

Joyner has lived in Hawaii for over 30 years and was at the forefront of human rights activism in the Pacific.

She said she was very excited when the plane landed at the Saipan airport.

"I recognized some [of the places I've been through during those times] but not the same as they were before. Saipan was really a devastated place. I still remember those days," she said.

Joyner is a former president of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition in Hawaii, a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as well as the Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

Yesterday's forum was part of the commemoration activities for MLK Day organized by the African-American Cultural Preservation Committee on Saipan led by its president, attorney Joe Hill.

The other members of the organizing committee are Joyner, SGM Leslie Jackson (ret.), Rebecca Warfield, Willie Brundidge, Walt Goodridge, Samuel Joyner Jr. and AACPC Secretary Hilda B. Joyner.

DOROMAL

From Page 1

manding that Cruz and Taotao Tano immediately stop their "wrongful publication" campaign against her.

Zielinski said his client has provided their office with multiple e-mail communications, letters, and other materials that Cruz had published about Doromal, to her detriment.

"The statements in your publications are inaccurate, defamatory and slanderous statements made in an effort to injure Ms. Doromal's good reputation as well as potentially interfere with her employment contract," the lawyer said.

The issue came up after Cruz wrote Department of Education State of Florida Commissioner Dr. Eric J. Smith on Jan. 10, 2009, complaining about Doromal's activities in the CNMI.

In that letter, the Taotao Tano president told Smith that Doromal has been "falsely accusing" the CNMI of human tortures and atrocities compared to that of a Third World country.

"For years now she had been heavily involved in the destruction of our homeland reputation throughout the United States, including teaching her false propaganda in your classrooms to young school children who have no idea where and what our island is all about," Cruz said.

Cruz promised to send Smith "a vast number of information" pertaining to Doromal's activities "under the guise of a human rights advocate."

On Jan. 11, 2009, Cruz also wrote a letter asking Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Corporation for National and Community Service Learn and Serve America, urging them to revoke the award given to Doromal during the 19th Annual Service Learning Conference in Minnesota and calling her a "fake human rights advocator."

Zielinski told Cruz that Doromal's actions that he is complaining about represent a U.S. citizen's legal duty to apprise her government of human rights violations within U.S. territories.

"Ms. Doromal's truthful testimony and lawful activities have received legislative support resulting in the enactment of laws that are designed to improve living conditions in the Mariana Islands," Zielinski said.

The lawyer said that if Cruz has issues with the law, there are legal methods available for him to challenge U.S. legislation.

Zielinski said a personal attack on Doromal "is not warranted and is actionable in a court of law."

He reminded Cruz that the decision to publish false and misleading materials to Doromal's employment supervisors constitutes "tortious interference" with her existing employment contractual relationship. This occurs when a person intentionally damages a plaintiff's contractual or other business relationships.

"As a citizen of a United States Territory, you are subject to the United States' Courts' jurisdiction," the lawyer told the Taotao Tano president.

Zielinski said if Cruz does not cease such actions immediately, they will not hesitate to seek monetary relief as well as injunctive relief against him and Taotao Tano.

In his response to Zielinksi Saturday, Cruz he is a poor man and doesn't have many material things that could be taken away but "I am passionate about defending my homeland and my people."

Cruz said the next time Doromal says anything in the press that is derogatory and untrue about the CNMI, he will see if he can sue her.

"Then you and I can have a good discussion in front of our court about the damage that Ms. Doromal's false accusations have had on our Commonwealth," Cruz told Zielinksi.

Cruz suggested that Zielinksi collect all the statements that Doromal has made over the past years about individuals and groups in the CNMI and then think about whether he could prove that Doromal's statements are true.

"I think it would be good to have an airing of all of this in a neutral court," Cruz said.

NMI

From Page 1

Washington D.C. time (1am Wednesday, CNMI time).

Tudela, who has been in D.C. for the annual U.S. Conference of Mayors, earlier said the moment he learned he would be in the nation's capital during the same period he signed up to watch the ceremony.

Tina Sablan, meanwhile, is traveling at her own expense to D.C. after she found $700 plane tickets from Korea. She will be staying with friends in the area. Rep. Sablan is one of the guests invited by Congressman Sablan to attend the ceremony.

Congressman Sablan said House members sit as a group when Obama takes his oath. They will gather in the Chamber just prior to the ceremony.

The Congressman said he would like to participate in the other activities taking place such as the parade, although he is not sure if he will be able to so.

"I would very much like to also watch the parade, or parts of it," he said in an e-mail. "There are a lot of other activities going on that I hope to attend but I am not sure I can attend all of them because I have constituents who will be in town and I want to ensure that they are safe and comfortable as they witness the historic inauguration of our 44th President."

Unfortunately, Congressman Sablan said, his wife and children are unable to attend the historic event.

"I wish my wife and children could be here for the inauguration, too. But our daughter cannot afford to miss two weeks of school," he said. "My wife has a job she is committed to, and my kids are dedicated to finishing high school at MBA. It means that there will be times, like this one, that I wish they could be by my side at an important event but because of the time and expense of travel to the mainland they can't be."

But, he added, he's happy other people from the CNMI will be able to witness the event.

"I'm just glad that people from the Commonwealth are here with me to witness this moment in American history. All our histories are changing and converging now. It is very good that we are here to be a part of that," he said.

Activities leading up to the swearing-in ceremony have been taking place since the start of the weekend. The presidential inauguration parade will follow the swearing-in ceremony.

PDI wants shuttle service, more dive shops on Rota

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The company behind the charter services on Rota said the destination would improve with the addition of shuttle service and the opening of more dive shops.

"It would be great to have a shuttle transfer during the scheduled charters, as a round-trip from the hotel to Songsong village is a splendid way to see Rota at a reasonable price. In addition, with only three dive companies there, we have to provide dive[masters] from Saipan," said Pacific Development Inc. president Yoichi Matsumura.

While Saipan is the more popular diver destination, Rota has made some inroads and with continued promotion will rival the CNMI capital in the future, he said.

Aside from lack of transportation and dive support, Matsumura said the southernmost chain of the Commonwealth is one of best kept tourism secret in the region.

"It's a real treasure chest, it's clean and quiet, real relaxing and as we have always shared with MVA [Marianas Visitors Authority], it really lives up to its image as the friendliest place to visit, a serene place you just want to return to and enjoy the peaceful and tranquil feeling you don't find in Guam, Saipan, and Tinian."

Matsumura added that as long as the CNMI provides support for promotional materials, PDI and its parent company, KNT Kinki Nippon Tourist Co., Ltd., will continue their effort to work with airlines to help Rota.

"Tinian with its casino, Saipan as a stop and [hub for the rest of the CNMI], and Guam for its mainstream entertainment down in Tumon, Rota is just a treasure chest," he said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Senate President Pete Reyes, Pacific Development, Inc. president Yoichi Matsumura, Rep. Victor Hocog, KNT executive senior managing director Ochi Yoshinori, Continental Sales and Marketing Japan Takashi Toru, KNT general manager Ohashi Tsutomu, and Holiday Tours Micronesia president Makoto Yashiro pose after a meeting in Capital Hill.

In related news, Matsumura and KNT executive senior managing director Ochi Yoshinori last week made a courtesy call to the 16th CNMI Legislature to extend their companies' appreciation to the people of the CNMI.

PDI and KNT completed 28 charter flight to Rota last year.

House Speaker Arnold Palacios, Senate President Pete Reyes, Rota Delegation chair Sen. Paul Manglona, Rep. Victor Hocog, and Saipan Delegation chair Rep. Ramon Tebuteb were present and applauded KNT, PDI, and Continental Micronesia for taking the risk to schedule charters "in these challenging and difficult economic times."

Kaipat says overstayers identified through computer-generated data

The Department of Labor and the Division of Immigration have identified overstayers in the CNMI through computer-generated data, according to Labor Deputy Secretary Cinta Kaipat.

Kaipat said overstayers are identified using factors such as the guest worker's arrival, expiration date, and failure to exit the Commonwealth as of the expiration date.

"The computer-generated data are hand-checked with other records, as necessary, to ensure accuracy as to factors that could affect each person's current status," said Kaipat in her interim report on the implementation of the new Labor reform law.

Each person who is identified as an overstayer is notified about this by publication in a newspaper once in each of two successive weeks.

"Any person identified as an overstayer erroneously is given 30 days to report to the appropriate office with the documentation necessary to correct the error," Kaipat said.

She said a final list of overstayers is certified to the Immigration director as persons who should be repatriated or deported.

Kaipat said Immigration locates the person and, if voluntary repatriation is not achieved, the Attorney General's Office begins deportation proceedings.

Last Dec. 1, Labor published in a newspaper a list containing 624 names of alleged overstayers from 2003 to 2007.

In the past two weeks, Immigration arrested six alleged illegal aliens. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Bill seeks 'stricter requirements' on hiring during continuing resolution

Under a new bill introduced by Rep. Ray Yumul, the Legislature must pass a joint resolution approving the hiring of additional employees during a period of continuing appropriations.

Yumul, chairman of the House Ways and Means committee, introduced the bill at the same time he introduced the revised fiscal year 2009 budget. A new budget was introduced last week after Gov. Benigno Fitial vetoed the original Legislature-approved budget. The House passed the revised budget last week and the Senate is expected to take it up today.

Without a fiscal year 2009 budget in place the government has been on continuing appropriations. Because the government failed to approve a fiscal year 2008 budget, it has been spending at the prior year's level.

Members of the Legislature have noted that hiring continues to take place despite the decline in revenue for the government.

The Supreme Court in Rayphand vs. Tenorio has questioned whether the governor possessed reprogramming authority during a period of continuing appropriations and has left open the possibility that the governor does not hold such authority, according to the bill.

"The Legislature finds that the public interest requires legislative approval of the filling of vacant positions during a period of continuing appropriations, and such approval is consistent with the balanced budget requirements of the Commonwealth Constitution," the bill states. ***(Kristi Eaton)***

Company files $1.8M suit vs 2 Nauru corporations

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Bahamian corporation has filed a $1.8 million lawsuit in the CNMI Superior Court against two corporations controlled by the Republic of Nauru for allegedly perpetrating fraud against their creditors.

Arrival Ventures Ltd., a Bahamian corporation that is authorized to transact business in the CNMI, sued the Nauru Phosphate Royalties Development (Honolulu) Inc., Nauru Phosphate Royalties Inc., and five unnamed co-defendants.

Arrival Ventures, through counsel Danilo T. Aguilar, asked the court to hold the defendants liable to pay the corporation $1,767,187 in damages.

Aguilar stated in the complaint that Nauru Phospate Royalties Development (Honolulu) Inc. (NPRD) was a corporation organized under the laws of Delaware, while Nauru Phosphate Royalties Inc. (NPR) was a corporation organized under Nauru laws.

Aguilar did not specifically state why the lawsuit was filed in the CNMI.

The Nauru Local Government Council used to own the Nauru Building in Susupe. In 2001, Blanco Estate Inc., owner of the Susupe land where the building is located, slapped the Council with a lawsuit for alleged unpaid rentals for the lots.

Aguilar said in the complaint that in the early 1980s, various governments of Nauru conducted a scheme by establishing a series of corporations around the world for purposes of concealing monies belonging to the country from its people and creditors.

To implement the scheme, the lawyer said, Nauru organized a series of shell corporations such as Central Pacific Securities PTY Ltd., Nauru House Maintenance Services PTY Ltd., Spencer Investments PTY Ltd., Eigigu Holdings Inc., and Central Pacific Holdings PTY Ltd. (the offshore entities).

He said Nauru also organized various other shell corporations in the United States such as NPRD and NPR, and various other Delaware and Guam corporations.

In 1980, Aguilar said Nauru established a Guam corporation named Nauru Corp. controlled by David E. Orlans.

Aguilar said Orlans was the Honorary Consul of Nauru to Guam and all the shares held in his name as a shareholder was meant to conceal its true owner's identity from creditors and the Nauruan people.

Orlans, he said, eventually transferred all the shares in the Guam corporation to Nauru upon its request.

In April 1988, Nauru also established NPRD and thereafter changes NPRD's principal offices from Delaware to Australia.

In July 1999, Aguilar said Nauru's Finance issued ¥5 billion in Japanese yen bonds that was guaranteed by Nauru. Aguilar said Nauru used much of the bond proceeds to fund various projects around the globe, including the development of Nauru Tower in Hawaii.

Aguilar said plaintiff Arrival Ventures is a bondholder of ¥100 million of the bonds, but the bonds matured and the issuer failed to repay the bond's principal and accrued interest.

Aguilar said Arrival Ventures demanded payment from the issuer, to no avail and neither did Nauru, which guaranteed the debt.

The lawyer said this failure to render any payments as required under the indenture resulted in the entry of a court judgment in the amount of $1.77 million against Nauru Finance Corp., Nauru, Nauru Corp. (Guam), Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust and Nauru Phosphate Corp.

Aguilar said Nauru is insolvent and unable to pay the judgment because it has concealed its assets in various corporations, including NPRD and NPR.

Aguilar said NPRD and NPR are liable for the acts of Nauru as its alter ego.

Aguilar said Nauru commingled its funds with other assets of NPRD and NPR and assets and funds of the offshore entities for its own convenience to assist in evading payment of obligations to creditors.

Neither NPRD or NPR, he said, ever had a board or annual meeting as required by its by-laws and Delaware and Nauru law.

Nauru, he said, used the corporate form as a conduit to conceal assets from its creditors.

Aguilar pointed out that Nauru has been named by the U.S. Department of Treasury as a primary money laundering concern for engaging in questionable financial transactions and allowing the country to be used for such questionable financial transactions.

He alleged that Nauru chose to raise capital on the international debt markets by selling bonds to investors like Arrival Ventures.

Aguilar said Nauru guaranteed the issuer's debt but with no intentions of paying it back and diverted those funds by using a host of corporate entities like NPRDC and NPR.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
RFQ09-GOV-035

Central Garapan Waterline Replacement

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting statements of qualification (SOQ) from licensed architectural and engineering firms (A&E) for the Design of the Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project, Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The full Request for Qualifications (RFQ) documents may be obtained by contacting Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, by telephone at (670) 664-2274 or by email at psas@saipan.com. All questions concerning this proposal shall be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 pm, January 27, 2009 to Mr. Sasamoto by facsimile at (670) 664-2279.

The design and construction of the Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project is made possible by a grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce. All element of the construction process shall meet standards of the EDA. The EDA grant is matched by a grant from the Office of the Insular Affairs (OIA), U.S. Department of the Interior and requires a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance.

One original and four (4) copies shall be submitted to the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than **2:00 PM, (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009**.

The SOQ shall be marked **"Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project, RFQ09-GOV-035"**. For firms within the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of SOQ must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **2:00 p.m. (CNMI local time), on February13, 2009**. Firms located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a **Notice of Intent to Propose**. Notices of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **2:00 p.m. (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009**, and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or email procurement@pticom.com. For firms located outside the CNMI, one original and four (4) copies of SOQ must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **February 13, 2009** AND must be received no later than **February 25, 2009**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

The CNMI reserves the right to reject any and all SOQ and to waive any imperfections in any SOQ if to do so shall be in the best interests of the CNMI. All SOQ shall become the exclusive property of the CNMI government.

Timothy P. Villagomez
Lt. Governor

Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement & Supply

Atalig launches bid to represent District II

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Businessman Eric Atalig relaunched yesterday his bid to become the next Representative of District II (Susupe) for the upcoming general elections in November.

Atalig

Atalig met with members of a committee endorsing his candidacy at the Susupe Community Center and Basketball Court.

The committee is composed of chair Joe Lizama, vice chair Jose Rasa, youth chair Billy Dela Cruz, and advisers Antonio Benavente, Gordon Marciano and Felix Limes.

Atalig said he is running under a platform of community improvement.

"The current representatives are lacking in programs for the district," said the 40-year old Atalig, who ran in 2005 under the Republican Party and lost the seat by 60 votes to Rep. Oscar Babauta.

This time, he will be running as an independent candidate.

"But it's not about political parties. I will still work with anyone on any issue," he said.

Atalig talked about the economic crisis as the biggest challenge the CNMI is facing.

He also lamented the exclusion of Russia and China from the visa waiver program.

"However, there are more simple things that we can do to help ease some of these problems like clean-up drives to make the community more enticing to investors and the putting up of more infrastructure in villages," he said.

Atalig worked for seven years for the Department of Public Works before he went into private business.

"The problem is that there is no real program for the youth. As you can see, this community center is dilapidated, with graffiti everywhere. We want to make sure that the youth will have a place to spend like two to three hours," he said.

He said he will also make himself available to help improve the educational system.

"There is nothing wrong with the PSS, but they need support from me. They need someone from the House to work with them and I feel like I can do a lot of things for PSS," Atalig said.

Local shrimp farm exports to Vietnam

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

A year after exporting parent shrimp to Indonesia, Saipan SyAqua Aquaculture sold 1,100 pieces of Pacific white shrimp broodstock to Vietnam last month.

Operations manager Rommel G. Catalma said the China Town shrimp farm sold 600 male and 500 female broodstocks to an undisclosed company in Vietnam through its sister company in Thailand.

Catalma said he cannot divulge the name of the purchaser because of its contract agreement with the company.

The sale of 1,100 pieces of Pacific white shrimp (Pennaeus Vannamei) is welcome news to Saipan SyAqua Aquaculture owner Anthony Pellegrino.

"Imagine little old Saipan exporting to Vietnam, which is a pro in the shrimp business and our shrimp are the breeders. Our mamas and papas are going to make all the babies for them to grow shrimps. Our customers are extremely happy we are about get another order from them soon."

Pellegrino said the company also has pending requests from India, Iran, and Indonesia for 1,100 pieces each at the end of the month.

Aside from this, the shrimp farm is doing fairly well locally.

"There are so many opportunities. I love that problem. We had just closed a contract for Palms Resort Saipan as they will start buying at least 1,000 lbs of shrimp a month. Saipan World Resort is also buying on the average 40 lbs a day," said Pellegrino.

Catalma, meanwhile, said with the increased demand for the shrimp, the company has no choice but to increase its production.

"Production now is about 6,000 lbs a month. We've got to expand and we're looking at it."

Currently, Saipan SyAqua is the only shrimp farm outside of Hawaii that exports Pacific white shrimp broodstock. This is because under the law, only U.S. territories are allowed to export the broodstock of that particular specie since it was developed by Hawaii's Oceanic Institute.

Catalma added that aside from the restriction, there are also stringent requirements to be able to export parent shrimp to other countries. First, a farm or facility needs a two-year disease free certification from the University of Arizona and then pass the inspection of the department of fisheries of the particular country the company is exporting to.

He said Saipan SyAqua passed the quarterly reviews from the University of Arizona and was given the green light to export by Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

At any given time, Saipan SyAqua has a million shrimps at its facility in China Town. Production, meanwhile, is around 6,000 lbs a month and increasing.

Bayani showcases Philippine folk dances, songs

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Tinikling, Pandango sa Ilaw, Salakot and *Singkil* are just some of the more popular folk dances in the Philippines and they were all big hits during Saturday evening's show dubbed "Balik-Tanaw sa Kulturang Pilipino" (A Glimpse of Filipino Culture).

Organized by the Bayani Association and the United Filipino Organization, the two-hour show at the Hibiscus Hall of Fiesta Resort & Spa drew a huge audience, who got a glimpse of the richness of the Filipino culture through songs and dances.

The Bayani Dance Troupe opened their performances with Spanish inspired dances—*Paso Doble, Polka sa Nayon, Mantones De Seda* and *Paseo De Ilo-Ilo*.

Regional dances that were showcased included *Idaw, Banga, Salidsid, Pandango sa Ilaw, Salakot, Sakuting, Tinikling, Makatod, Malong-Malong, kini-kini, Asik* and *Singkil*.

Like any other cultural shows in the Philippines, the *Tinikling* was undoubtedly the biggest hit of the night. An indigenous dance inspired by farmers catching rice birds called *tinikling*, the dance features couples stepping in sync between bamboo poles that are being tapped against each other.

Besides the dances, the banquet show also featured folk songs interpreted by Ricky Custodio, Virginia Hernandez, Claire Ramos and Judy Lalaine Nodado.

Philippine Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo stressed the importance of these traditional dances to the Filipino culture, saying they capture all the nuances of what it means to be a Filipino.

Net proceeds of the cultural show and dinner banquet will be donated to the Guma Esperansa.

Bayani Association president Tina Lifoifoi said that Guma Esperansa continues to provide shelter and assistance to victims of violence, sexual assault and human trafficking in the CNMI.

Guma Esperansa manager Lauri Ogumoro thanked the organizers, saying these would be a big help to their programs.

The cultural show was jointly sponsored by private companies including AON Insurance, Armatech, Century Insurance, Hardt Eye Clinic, Traders Insurance, IT&E/PTI, Pacific Homes Appliances, Tan Holdings Corp., Pacific Marine Industrial, Jo's Corp., Shell Marianas, Fiesta Resort & Spa, KC Beauty Salon, Ren-ren Santos, and the *Saipan Tribune* and *Marianas Variety*.

This is one of the scenes in the grand finale for the show, inspired by the Muslim dance singkil.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

A woman performs the banga, which is derived from the earthen pot called banga that are stacked and carried on her head while dancing.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

One of the most popular folk dances is the Pandango sa Ilaw, a combination of grace and balance as women carry candle lights on their heads while dancing.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

The Kappa Malong-Malong is performed by Maranaos in Mindanao.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

The salakot dance is also one of the most colorful with the performers using the salakot as props. Salakot is a traditional wide-brimmed hat in the Philippines.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Public Health
Division of Public Health

WIC

ATTENTION:

ALL CNMI BAKERIES

The CNMI WIC Program is inviting all bakeries to create a 100% Whole Wheat Bread (1 lb. loaf) for the New WIC Food Package beginning October 1, 2009. We estimate that approximately 2000-3000 loaves will be sold to WIC participants per month.

Should your company wish to have its 100% whole wheat bread approved by the WIC Program please submit the Ingredients List and Nutrition Facts Label by fax or E-mail to (670) 664-4069 or fabianu@cnmiwic.org on or before January 31, 2009.

Please call Fabian Ulloa at (670) 664-4067 should you have any questions.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Vanuatu police beat up *Post* publisher

PORT VILA, Vanuatu (Vanuatu Daily Post/PIR)—The *Daily Post* publisher, Marc Neil-Jones, was assaulted by members of Correctional Services in a nasty incident at the newspaper office on Saturday at about 12:45pm that left him with a suspected broken nose, bruised eye and abrasions.

The 51-year-old Vanuatu citizen was by himself in his office when a truck pulled up with angry officers allegedly under the influence of alcohol working with Correctional Services at the prison.

They stormed into the office and accused Neil-Jones of causing the dismissal of Joshua Bong as acting Director of Correctional Services and demanding to know who was going to look after the prisoners now.

Neil-Jones said he tried to reason with them that he was not responsible for deciding what went in the newspaper day to day but they would not listen, made racist comments to the effect that this was their country and threw a computer to the ground, overturned plants and punched and kicked him.

A shaken Neil-Jones recounted, "One of them was well built, strong and with a belly. He…punched me in the eye and nose and hit me four or five times. I was kicked a number of times when I was on the ground. The two others with him threatened to kill me because I hadn't gotten their side of the story on the problems with the prison. One threatened me with a knife and said he would cut my neck and another threatened to shoot me with a gun. They said they were going to take me to the prison to look after the prisoners. It was not a pleasant experience.

"They repeatedly said I was responsible for the problems with the prisoners because my staff journalists had not gotten their side of the story. I think they must have read the paper and seen the news on Saturday that the Prime Minister's office had made the decision to remove Bong from the position of Acting DG of Correctional services and replaced him with Mark Bebe."

Neil-Jones had written a strong editorial in the *Post* after the prison had been burnt down, calling for Joshua Bong to step down or be suspended until the results of the Commission of Enquiry led by Professor Don Patterson had been completed.

The prisoners' controversial report claimed numerous human rights violations allegedly committed by Bong and his Correctional Services officers. Neil-Jones had said that the numerous prison escapes, allegations of human rights problems in the jail and the burning down of the jail under Bong's control were grounds for suspension until such time as Commission of Enquiry was completed.

The publisher has now demanded that the police, Correctional Services and government arrest those who were involved and sort the matter out internally.

Commander South Superintendent John Taleo has confirmed Neil-Jones filed an official complaint against his assailants immediately following the incident. Police are investigating the assault.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Diabetes on rise in Solomon Islands

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Star/PIR)—The number of people in the Solomon Islands with diabetes is increasing, a health official says. In the year 2007, more than 3,000 diabetic cases were recorded in the country. Facilitator of Non Communicable Disease Unit in the Ministry of Health and Medical Services Mavis Kwanairara said diabetes can only be prevented if people practice and live a healthy lifestyle. Kwanairara said change of lifestyle is one of the major factors contributing to the increase of the disease here.

French Polynesia inflation highest in four years

PAPEETE, Tahiti (Tahitipresse/PIR)—Tahiti's consumer price index increased 0.5 percent in December, creating a 2008 inflation rate, as measured by the CPI of 3.4 percent, the highest rate of the past four years, according to the French Polynesia Statistical Institute. The 2007 inflation rate was 1.9 percent after a 2.4 percent rate in 2006 and a 2.3 percent inflation rate in 2005. The ISPF also reported a 2.9 percent drop in overall employment for the 12 months ending in November. That created an employment situation much lower than the average over the past five years for each of the five sectors measured by the ISPF. It also was the weakest employment situation ever noted, the ISPF reported.

American Samoa lawmaker wants background checks

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—An American Samoa lawmaker says Cabinet appointments that come before the House for confirmation should be required to undergo a thorough background check. Leapai Sipa Anoai believes the House should expand its review of appointments to include background checks that cover medical status, police records and even financial status. He says this information will provide further details for lawmakers so they would know exactly who the cabinet nominee is.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB09-GOV-043
(1/20/09)

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 12, 2009 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PROCUREMENT OF A FORKLIFT FOR THE CNMI WATER TASK FORCE"

A COPY OF THE SPECIFICATION MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWER BASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO U.S. CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **TIMOTHY P. VILLAGOMEZ**
LT. GOVERNOR

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-CHC-033

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 03, 2009 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"PURCHASE OF THREE (3) VENTILATOR SYSTEM FOR THE RESPIRATORY UNITY FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB09-CDD-036

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: JANUARY 28, 2009 • TIME: 11:00 A.M.

"JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR THE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **PAMELA C. SABLAN**
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

MEETING NOTICE

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority, hereby gives notice that a **Regular Board Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, January 22, 2009** at 9:00 a.m. at the MVA Conference Room, San Jose Professional Building Saipan, MP 96950.

AGENDA

1) **Preliminary Matters**
   a. Call to Order
   b. Roll Call
   c. Adoption of Agenda
   d. Adoption of Minutes
      • November 28, 2008
2) **Public Comments**
3) **Committee Reports**
   a. Finance
      i. Committee Recommendations for FY 2009 Budget
   b. Policy
   c. Personnel
   d. Ad Hoc Reports
4) **Old Business**
   a. Revisions on Korea Projects
5) **New Business**
   a. Printing of Customs Forms
   b. Tourist Exit Survey
   c. Japan Marketing Activities
      i. Office Lady Market Promotion
      ii. PIC Beach Volleyball Tournaments
   d. Korea Marketing Activities – January through March
      i. Consumer Gift Promotion
      ii. Seoul Volume Incentive Program
      iii. Busan Volume Incentive Program
      iv. Production of MVA Korea Paper Shopping Bags
      v. FAM Tour with Mode Tour
6) **Executive Session**
7) **Adjournment**

/s/ Jerry Tan
Chairman, MVA Board of Directors

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 20, 1999

OIA report challenged

Commonwealth and federal negotiators yesterday began a four-day meeting they hoped would ease strains in CNMI-US ties, promising to have an open mind in bridging differences in addressing problems on labor, immigration and customs. After two attempts to revive the stalled discussions failed last year, the Section 902 talks finally resumed at a simple rites held at the Hyatt, marked with friendly exchange of views, according to officials of both sides. The heads of both panels said they were willing to listen to each government's concerns as they explore possible solutions to a host of problems arising from CNMI's dependence on guest workers, whose growth over the years has worried the federal government.

SGMA: $1B suit 'unsubstantiated'

The Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association yesterday brushed aside three lawsuits initiated by a New York-based law firm against the CNMI apparel industry and its U.S. buyers, saying the allegations were rehash of previous criticisms and were largely unsubstantiated. The group, comprised mostly of the island's largest garment firms, also reiterated earlier vows to clean up the industry and to further improve working and living conditions for the thousands of foreign workers employed by the sector. In a statement, SGMA expressed confidence the court will find the claims made in the $1 billion lawsuits to be "embellished and exaggerated accounts of wage and rights abuse."

January 20, 2000

U.S. Supreme Court upholds three-seat representation

The U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed a ruling handed down by the federal district court last year upholding the present composition of the CNMI Senate which provides three seats each for the islands of Rota, Saipan and Tinian. Government officials hailed the judgment that came Tuesday (Wednesday local time), throwing out the nearly three-year legal battle waged by Rep. Stanley T. Torres and lawyer Jeanne Rayphand. In the one-sheet order, the Supreme Court said the lower court's ruling is affirmed and that the plaintiff has at least 25 days to petition for a rehearing. There is no immediate reaction from Torres and Rayphand or their counsel Ted Mitchell. But opposition against the lawsuit filed in 1997 welcomed the court's decision.

Teno eliminates retirement bonus

Ending years of abuse on CNMI's generous retirement benefits, Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has signed a law to eliminate the 30 percent bonus given to early retirees in what he said is necessary to ease financial burden on the government. Public Law 11-114 cuts the costly program under the Commonwealth Early Retirement Act passed by the Legislature in 1993, effectively denying government employees hired after Dec. 15, 1999 from receiving this benefit. But the governor noted the new law will not provide an immediate resolution to the program's financial situation sought by the NMI Retirement Fund which had been lobbying removal of such monetary reward in fear it could bankrupt the agency.

January 20, 2003

Yanyan evicts 38 persons

Some 38 persons took refuge at evacuation shelters on Saipan over the weekend, as storm Yanyan—the year's first in the Marianas—swung by the islands. But Emergency Management Office director Rudolfo Pua said there were no reported damage to public facilities—not even on Rota. "They felt the wind and the rain but there were none [further damages] reported," Pua said. Rota has yet to fully recover from the severe destruction caused by supertyphoon Pongsona last December. As of 1pm yesterday, Gov. Juan N. Babauta lifted the storm condition declarations for Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Agrihan, an EMO statement said.

NMIRF reserves down to zero

$45.7 million. That is the amount that is needed to operate the NMI Retirement Fund for one whole year, and that is the amount that the Fund is looking for right now, as it seeks to infuse cash into its reserve account that is currently zero. Toward this end, Board chairman Joseph Reyes directed Fund administrator Karl T. Reyes and comptroller Noel Soria in last Thursday's board meeting to come up with a feasible plan that would put money into the Fund's reserves so it won't be caught with its pants down come year 2020—the deadline set by the Fund's charter for it to become self-sufficient.

Tan Holdings honors outstanding employees of 2008

Five also honored as Volunteers of the Year

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Tan Holdings Corp. held its annual employee recognition night on Friday, Jan. 16, at the Club V of Saipan Grand Hotel to honor its outstanding employees of 2008.

The Human Resources Department under the office of senior vice president Eli Arago, in collaboration with the executives of eight affiliates, paid tribute to 24 best employees and managers of each affiliate company, from among whom the overall awardees were chosen.

Tan Holdings Corp. president Jerry Tan honors the lone employee who qualified for the 25-year Corporate Service Award, Benjie Bocago of Realty Management Services.

REY BELGADO

For the first time, Tan Holdings also recognized five of its employees who have contributed to the advancement of community volunteerism in the CNMI.

Cornelio L. Matanguihan, general manager of Century Insurance Corp., was picked as the overall Outstanding Executive of the Year, while Mario C. Mayuga, L&T Engineering and Maintenance Manager, was declared the overall Outstanding Manager of the Year.

The other overall winners:

- Rogelio Espiritu, POI officer-in-charge for GSE Mechanic, Outstanding Supervisor for Operations;
- Cesar G. Lopez, Century Travel accounting officer, Outstanding Supervisor for Support;
- Crispin G. Dayao Jr., *Saipan Tribune* graphic artist, Outstanding Employee for Operations; and
- Elvis V. Madela, Fiesta Resort & Spa attendant, Outstanding Employee for Support.

All winners received plaques of recognition and cash prizes.

For the first time in its corporate history, Tan Holdings recognized five individuals for being outstanding volunteers in the community. The honor forms part of Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan's vision of inspiring volunteerism within the company and enabling employees to give back to the community.

The five Volunteer of the Year awardees were:

- Ladyvir D. Canape, Cosmos accountant;
- Lynn Knight, *Saipan Tribune* publisher and Tan Holdings vice president for Corporate Affairs;
- Ivan E. Quichocho, vice president, Logistics/CFC/Tan Holdings;
- Robert R. Reyes, CTSI account executive; and
- David M. Sablan, CIC and CTAI president/RMS and TSL Plaza vice president.

From right, Tan Holdings Corp. president Jerry Tan, vice president for Finance Lina Dimaano, senior vice president Eli Arago, Cornelio L. Matanguihan, general manager of Century Insurance Corp.; Rogelio Espiritu, POI officer-in-charge for GSE Mechanic; Cesar G. Lopez, Century Travel Accounting Officer; Crispin G. Dayao Jr., *Saipan Tribune* graphic artist; Elvis V. Madela, Fiesta Resort & Spa attendant; and David M. Sablan, CIC and CTAI president/RMS and TSL Plaza vice president.

REY BELGADO

The Corporate Service Awardees for five years service to Tan Holdings Corp. pose with Tan Holdings Corp. president Jerry Tan, vice president for Finance Lina Dimaano, senior vice president Eli Arago after being conferred their plaques of recognition.

REY BELGADO

Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan, leftmost, poses with the Volunteers of the Year awardees, from right Ladyvir D. Canape, Ivan E. Quichocho, Lynn Knight, and David M. Sablan.

REY BELGADO

Also given recognition were Tan Holdings employees who have been with the company for five years, 10 years, 15 years and 25 years.

Only one person qualified for the 25th year Corporate Service Award: Benjie Bocago of Realty Management Services, who was specially recognized by corporation president Tan during the occasion.

Tan congratulated the winners of the annual awards. He also thanked the entire staff of the company for helping the Tan Holdings weather a tough year in 2008.

Generally, he said the company did well last year compared to other businesses on the island but he expects the sailing to get tougher in 2009.

Despite this, with the executives, managers, and employees' dedication and determination, Tan Holdings is confident in facing the challenges of the current year head on, he added.

The night's emcees were HR senior manager Malou Ernest and Ed Arriola of Corporate Affairs.

The 15-year Corporate Service Awardees pose with Tan Holdings Corp. president Jerry Tan, vice president for Finance Lina Dimaano, senior vice president Eli Arago.

REY BELGADO

The 10-year Corporate Service Awardees pose with Tan Holdings Corp. president Jerry Tan, vice president for Finance Lina Dimaano, senior vice president Eli Arago.

REY BELGADO

HR senior manager Malou Ernest and Ed Arriola of Corporate Affairs perform hosting duties for the night.

ROSELYN MONROYO

Tan Holdings Corp. senior vice president Eli Arago and Ed Arriola of Corporate Affairs raffle off two round-trip plane tickets to the Philippines at the conclusion of the Recognition Night.

ROSELYN MONROYO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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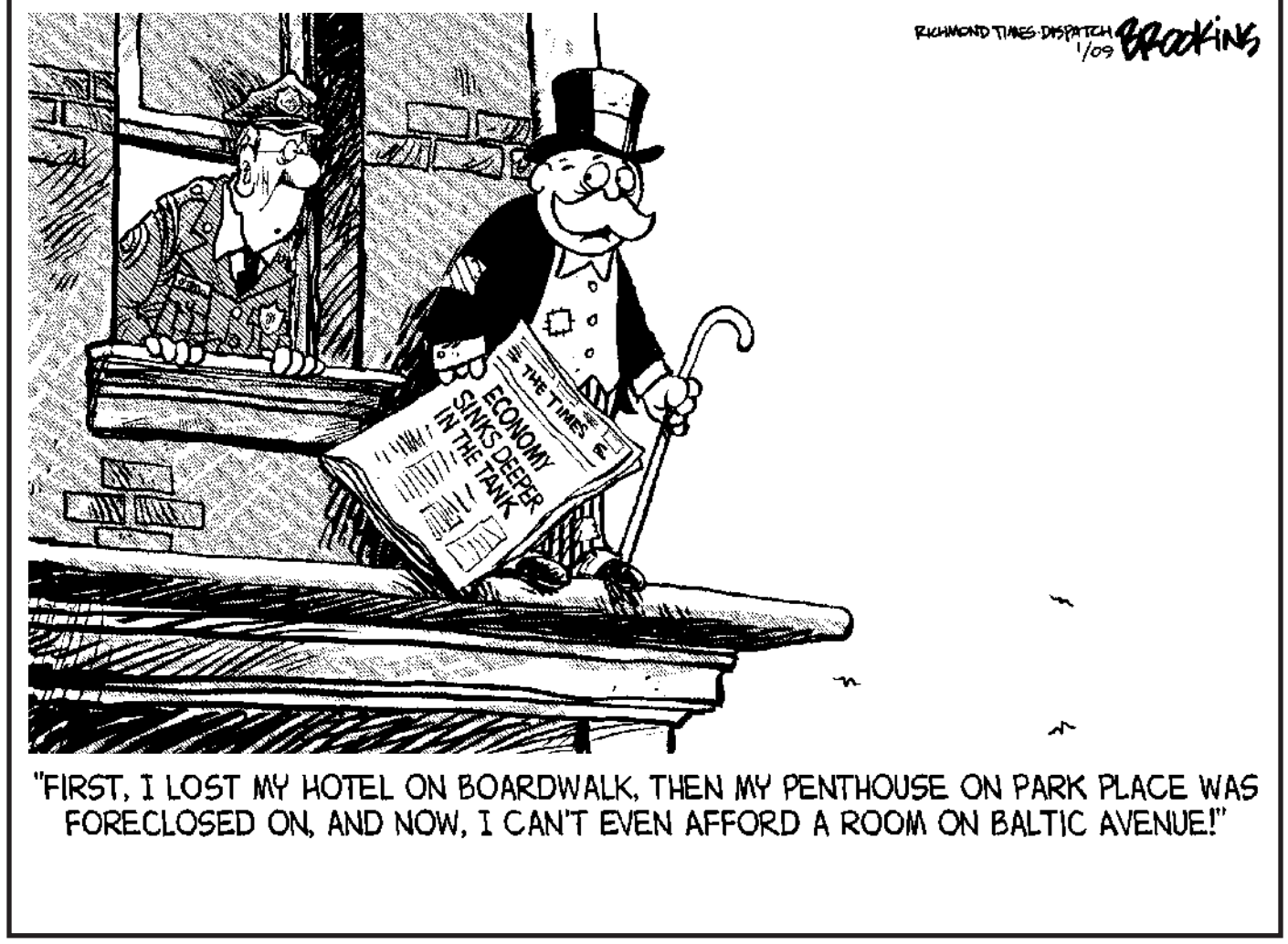
RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH 1/09 BROOKINS
THE TIMES
ECONOMY SINKS DEEPER IN THE TANK
"FIRST, I LOST MY HOTEL ON BOARDWALK, THEN MY PENTHOUSE ON PARK PLACE WAS FORECLOSED ON, AND NOW, I CAN'T EVEN AFFORD A ROOM ON BALTIC AVENUE!"

EDITORIAL

Swearing-in to a new Declaration of Independence

Today marks a turning point in the journey of America. While the junior senator of Illinois, Barack Hussein Obama, gets sworn in as the 44th President of the United States of America, citizens across the nation are swearing themselves in to whatever choice they have made in response to the President-elect's earnest call to service to the electorate.

Like any newness in the plane of reality, it is helpful to undertake necessary deconstructions of taken-for-granted commonplaces. Already, the media's default phrase to Obama's presidency appears to be the first *Black* President. One is not quite sure what "black" means or whether it means anything specific at all, save that already, jokes in the Internet already include such image as the Black House on Pennsylvania Ave. We in the media should cut this trend in the bud and stick with the objective and accurate description of the "44th President of the United States of America."

Each president recites the following oath, in accordance with Article II, Section I of the U.S. Constitution: *"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."* The Constitution begins with *"We the People . . ."* and President Obama seems to have taken the Lincoln definition—*"a government of the people, by the people and for the people,"* not only to heart but also as an operating mode.

A call to service was a central theme of his campaign, and has become an early benchmark of this incoming administration. Already, people across the nation on the eve of the inauguration are reciting in front of their video cameras the oath that Obama will make today, in an act that is more than just a consent of the governed, but to a willful and determined participation in the affairs of the state.

To the Inauguration, the Obamas took the train from Springfield, Illinois to Washington, D.C. in the same fashion that his predecessor some148 years before traveled to the Capital City. In Philadelphia, where he was joined by the Vice President-elect, Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware, the President-elect called for a New Declaration of Independence.

At Baltimore Memorial Plaza on his whistle-stop tour to Washington, D.C., he declared: *"What is required is a new declaration of independence, not just in our nation, but in our own lives—from ideology and small thinking, prejudice and bigotry—an appeal not to our easy instincts, but to our better angels."* This echoes the language of Abe Lincoln's inaugural speech when he addressed the Union *sans* the seven States that seceded: *"The mystic chords of memory . . . will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again* touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

What makes Obama such an appealing leader is his compassion, which he wears on his sleeves. There is a saying of wisdom in the Ethio-Kenyan borderlands that runs: *"Great leaders have big hearts."* It would not be difficult to imagine the proletarian *pergerakan* movement of Indonesia and the *aloha* spirit of Hawaii influencing the journey of young Obama from Punahuo to Harvard, and spilling over to practical issues on the Southside of Chicago in the tradition of community empowerment of the

See SWEARING-IN on Next Page

A joyful, historic time

By QUINCY JONES
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Spanning six decades, the career of multi-Grammy winning producer, composer, arranger and humanitarian Jones has encompassed working with artists from Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra to Michael Jackson, Will Smith and Oprah Winfrey; most recently he wrote The Complete Quincy Jones: My Journey and Passions.

Like many Americans and citizens of the world, on the morning of Nov. 5 I awoke with a renewed sense of purpose. Having witnessed the night before an event that I never ever imagined contemplating—the election of an African-American to the office of president of the United States of America—I felt truly vindicated in the belief that if you live long enough, anything is possible.

The night before, as I sat with family and friends watching the election results come in, I resigned myself to tempering my emotions. Like all of Barack Obama's supporters, I was encouraged by the strength, poise and deftness with which he ran his campaign. I knew that he was the best person for the job. But as a black man in America, I knew from experience not to let what I wanted to happen stray too far from the reality of what I knew could happen.

Like many African-Americans of my generation, my American experience was one that was steeped in the ideology that we were, at best, second-class citizens. Born in Chicago during the Depression, my future seemed destined to be an anonymous existence doing whatever was necessary to survive. But luckily, through a series of events, my beloved father would move my brother Lloyd and me to Seattle, where—and I can only credit divine intervention for this—I would find music and the path to what would eventually lead to a very different and equally unimaginable future for me.

When I was a teen in Seattle during the 1940s, we didn't have Will Smiths or Michael Jordans or Oprah Winfreys to look to as role models. The people I looked to for inspiration were the musicians who lived in town and came through on tour. Men such as Clark Terry, Lionel Hampton, Count Basie, Bobby Tucker, Bumps Blackwell and Ray Charles, among many others. Men who took me under their wings and not only encouraged me where music was concerned but also told me about the great wide world that existed out there for me if I wanted it.

Coupled with my experience at Garfield High School—at the time and today one of the most progressive high schools in America, where multiculturalism was not only encouraged but celebrated—I had a deep sense early on that there was more to mankind's coexistence on this planet than "us and them." But I was not naive and I did not live life through rose-colored glasses. I was more than aware of the prevalent racial attitudes of my country, and if any validation was needed it was easily found when I was a young musician touring with Lionel Hampton.

Traveling across the segregated South on a bus full of musicians—the sole white person being the bus driver, because we would need him to go into restaurants to get us food—I saw the requisite "white" and "colored" water fountains and restrooms, the dance halls where the audience seating was segregated, with the whites sitting in the balcony. Driving through five towns in Texas because stopping wasn't remotely an option, only to finally arrive in Dallas to an effigy of a black man with a noose around its neck hanging from the highest church steeple in town ... the message was loud and clear.

But I knew that the gift of music that I was provided with could overcome cultural boundaries and bring people of different opinions together. And on my first trips to Europe, where audiences and fellow musicians of all hues engaged us as men of equal stature, and again as the musical director for Dizzy Gillespie's State Department Tour, my instincts proved to be correct. Our official mandate was to be a goodwill tour of the Middle East, Europe and South America, but in reality we were what I dubbed a "kamikaze" band that was sent into hot spots to quell civil unrest in places like Cyprus, Beirut and Tehran, to name a few.

I like to think that we did a lot of good performing all over the world, sharing our music and culture by building bridges, and it instilled in me a sense that there are good people and bad people all around the world of every shade, and more times than not, the good people come together and outnumber the bad.

As I moved forward with my career, I paid close attention to how the world viewed America and how America viewed its citizens. I watched a young reverend from Atlanta rise to preach peaceful civil disobedience, a Nation of Islam minister stand and proclaim that self-reliance was the answer, and a people embrace and celebrate black pride and individualism. I watched as our country slowly evolved because of the realization that no longer would African-Americans lie down and accept oppression, no matter what kind of veil it was covered with. And we continued to expect and live up to all the rights afforded us in the Constitution of our nation and worked to excel and achieve our dreams, because not to would be a step backward, and that simply was not an option.

See A JOYFUL on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Driven to Obamaville by something 'bigger than us'

By MARC FISHER
(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Fisher is a columnist for The Washington Post*'s Metro section.*

The phone started ringing at Cherry Hill RV Park the morning after the election, but Mike and Linda Gurevich didn't really believe it until the recreational vehicles started lumbering in by the hundreds. Winter's a quiet time at the Gureviches' campgrounds in College Park, Md., but this weekend, their 60 acres hard by the Beltway turned into an instant Obamaville.

It was a community of people from all across the land who felt compelled to be here, not because they're political types, not because they worked for Barack Obama's presidential campaign, but because they believe to their core that there's good mileage left in this battered old tin can of a country.

They came without tickets and without connections, they came even without a map. They came, in many cases, even though they'd never driven an RV before, but hey, it can't be too hard, right?

All night long on the way from Alabama, Donna Robinson couldn't get the heat working right in the 32-footer she rented with money raised from selling cakes and Obama T-shirts. "It was like the tundra in there," she said.

Ron Sorenson drove up from Florida by himself because his fiancee didn't want to die while he figured out how to maneuver a land yacht. Kathy Kafka flew, thank you very much.

In the park's general store, Mike Gurevich stocked up with Obama souvenirs, newspapers and schedules for Metrobus, which added seven extra buses from the RV park down to the Greenbelt, Md., rail station. Gurevich hosted a couple of dozen folks back when Bill Clinton was first sworn in and a handful for George W. Bush ("mostly protesters"). Saturday, he was full up, 270 RVs.

Inside them were people who refuse to be thrown off by bad times.

Sorenson built houses, for good money, and then he didn't. When the music stopped, he was left with three houses no one would buy, at any price. He could have settled into the couch, like he's seen too many of his friends do, moping and grousing and waiting for who knows what to happen.

Robinson was getting by. A disabled Marine, she had it tough, but at least she had the house and her daughter was in college. Then she came home one day to find that the pipe in the master bath had ruptured, and the house was finished, flooded. She ended up in a motel with her daughter for months on end, out of work, out of cash, out of exits.

Gary Doring drove 3,221 miles from Oakland, Calif., with his dachshund in a 26-footer. "I just knew I had to come," he told me after he sang the praises of Mountain Dew, the sacred elixir that got him across the continent. "Obama's got a tough, unbelievable job ahead of him, and he just needs all the energy and support he can get."

Doring, 61, ran a restaurant in Sausalito for 25 years, then discovered the miracle of real estate, becoming a landlord and scoring enough green to keep him living in golf course houses on both coasts.

"We got sort of lost in all the money," he said. Then he woke up, saw the pain on his city's streets, decided things had taken a wrong turn. His wife, a Pan Am flight attendant for years, lost her retirement income, and Doring realized how many people in so many fields had worked for decades only to find themselves dumped into old age without the security they thought they had achieved.

Obama, he said, feels like someone who won't accept that kind of breach of trust. "There's a presence about certain people, you can just feel it, that's he's a more enlightened person, and the greed has just gone too far. I should be a Republican, too—for the low taxes—but Obama makes me feel there is hope, something much bigger than us."

Down in Weaver, Ala., Robinson felt that presence the first time she saw Obama on television. "I thought, 'Wow, who is this guy?' And I don't know why, I just started reading Joshua in the Bible."

Robinson, 43, knew she had to come to Washington. She teamed with 12 cousins and other relations, taking the kids out of school. (She has given them assignments—every day, they must write reports on everything they see and learn.)

"I just want to stand with my children on the place where Martin Luther King said that one day this world will be able to be the same for everybody," she said. "Maybe I'll come back to Alabama and nothing will be changed, but I'll still be there with my two girls and my arms around them showing them what hope can bring. I know I'll be crying. I don't know anything else to do."

Sorenson spent $5,000 wrapping his rented RV with giant portraits of Obama and King, as well as texts of some of Sorenson's poems, stream-of-consciousness pleas for love and compassion, the result of a life that didn't always go as he had planned.

Not long ago, he was building millions of dollars of houses on Florida's Gulf Coast. Then he watched loan companies take those houses. Not long ago, his son was filled with dreams. Then Ron went with his boy to Arlington National Cemetery to bury the boy's sergeant. "War, it's close," Ron writes. "Killed, gone from here. ... Life is time, there's not enough to fight."

He has always been a Republican, it's how he was raised. Now, at 51, he's driving up the coast with Obama's face plastered all over an RV. "I saw him and I said, 'That's the president,'" Sorenson said. "He inspired me to get up. He sucks me right in. Three years ago, I could have retired and now I've lost everything. But Obama got me off the couch—quit complaining about how bad everything is."

THE WASHINGTON POST

Ron Sorenson and his fiancee, Kathy Kafka, hold a friend's artwork, including a poem by Sorenson, which he hopes to give to Barack Obama. The couple, from Florida, are among the many people from around the country staying at a Maryland RV park for the inauguration.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Ron Sorenson's RV is wrapped with portraits of the president-elect and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. "Obama got me off the couch—quit complaining about how bad everything is," he says.

In Obamaville, nobody talks about the historic moment. As I wandered around, I decided not to mention race, and sure enough, not a soul said a word about it. No need.

What matters in this RV park is not what's different, but what's in common: Somehow, despite Wall Street crooks and lost jobs, despite divisions of war and class, the RVs roll in packed with people who still think they own this thing. They believe they have a duty to be here because, in the end, they're in charge. Which is why it works, why it has a future, even now.

A JOYFUL

From Page 10

As a people we had advanced to the highest levels of politics, business and creativity. But for all that we had accomplished and overcome, there I sat on Nov. 4, watching with measured anticipation as the results for each state were called.

And then California was called and candidate Obama became President-elect Obama. Like so many around the world, but especially African-Americans, my heart swelled with joy in a way that it had never swelled before—the exception, of course, being the births of my children.

For all that our people had suffered and endured—from the genocide of the middle passage to the torture of body and spirit and the systematic dismantling of our families under the burden of slavery, the terrorism that came with Reconstruction, the institutionalized racism and the struggle for civil rights—a man who looked like me would now be president of the United States of America.

And like so many of us, I wept. I wept for all of the souls, known and unknown, who sacrificed their lives to get to this moment. I wept for those who are no longer with us who, like me, could never have fathomed that this could possibly happen. But mostly I wept for my father and brother Lloyd, who I wish could have lived to see this moment.

I don't think that anyone can argue whether Obama's election brought a renewed sense of hope and faith in America around the world. In the weeks following his election, I received calls of exultation from 15 heads of state. Obama has a tremendous amount of work to do setting America back on the proper course, but I feel he has the spirit of cooperation from the world behind his back.

Here at home he will, of course, have his detractors; they've already begun their campaign to discredit and tear down his presidency, and he hasn't taken office yet. But he has instilled in the American people who elected him a sense of hope for our country that we haven't seen in a long time, and with that kind of collective positivity, I know that a brighter, more prosperous future lies ahead.

And while his rise to the office of the president in no way means that America doesn't have a lot of work to do with regard to race in our country, it gives me great comfort to know that every young American boy and girl (thank you, Hillary Clinton) from here on can grow up believing that "one day, I might be president" and know that it's not an unthinkable fantasy.

SWEARING-IN

From Page 10

Back of the Yards movement of the '30s.

NMPASI's James Rayphand penned in this pages the rising sentiment found in Obama's leadership style. He wrote: *"Some would have us believe that the problems of our society need to be handled from the top down—the big shots know what's best and that the little man has very little to no effect on what happens. The fact is nothing could be further from the truth."* He then extols the virtues of FDR, a man in a wheelchair who did not hesitate to preside over the affairs of the State with his "New Deal," and led a nation from depression to prosperity.

It is as if Obama thunders across the nation today with but one injunction: Let us all go out and do likewise!

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Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°

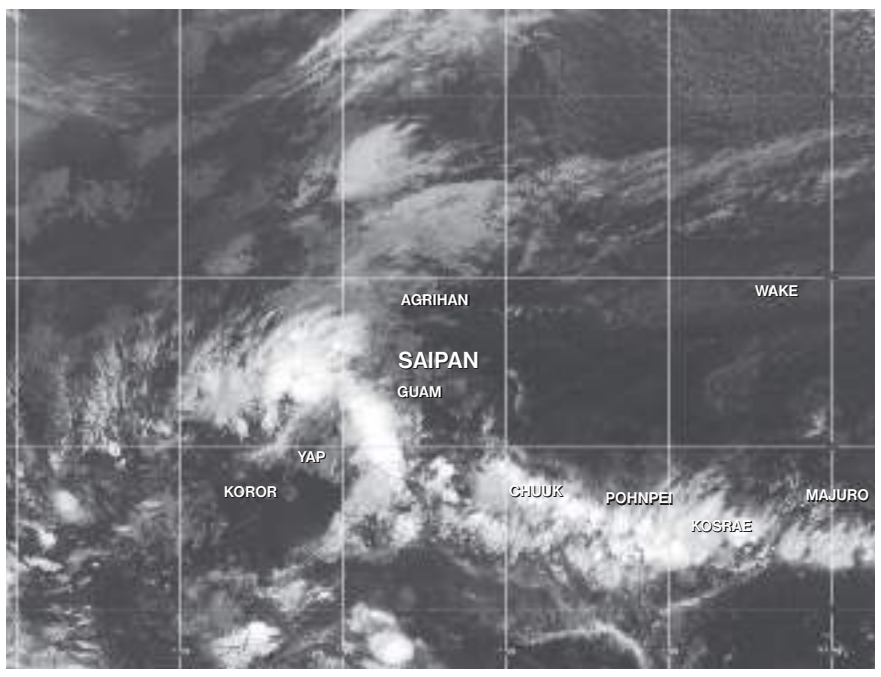
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲82	▼75
Palau	Showers	▲84	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼76
Chuuk	Showers	▲89	▼78
Pohnpei	Rain	▲84	▼79
Kosrae	Showers	▲84	▼79
Majuro	Sunny	▲84	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲70	▼63
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲43	▼18
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲72	▼61
Honolulu	Showers	▲76	▼66
London	Cloudy	▲41	▼36
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲77	▼52
Manila	Showers	▲87	▼74
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲94	▼67
Miami	Showers	▲74	▼44
New York	Cloudy	▲30	▼20
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲48	▼37
Paris	Showers	▲37	▼30
Pusan	Cloudy	▲50	▼35
Rome	Showers	▲56	▼53
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲49	▼30
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲62	▼47
Seoul	Cloudy	▲45	▼30
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲50	▼41
Washington, DC	Cold	▲32	▼20

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, MONDAY, JAN. 19, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough extends southwestward from 18N138E to 7N135E. Scattered showers and few thunderstorms are occurring over Koror within an area bounded by a line from 18N140E to 13N130E to 7N130E to 7N137E to 6N140E back to 18N140E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms east of Yap and over Chuuk and Pohnpei within 125 miles of a line extending east-southeastward from 9N139E to 4N160E over Kosrae and southern portions of the Marshall Islands within 100 miles of a line extending eastward from 4N160E to 5N170E and within 50 miles of a line extending eastward from 5N170E to 4N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
4:46 AM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
8:37 AM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
2:10 PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
10:19 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:09 PM
Wednesday	6:47 AM	6:09 PM
Thursday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:38 AM	1:07 PM
Wednesday	2:30 AM	1:53 PM
Thursday	3:23 AM	2:42 PM
Friday	4:14 AM	3:33 PM
Saturday	5:03 AM	4:25 PM

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
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- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

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- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Obama's job and ours

By ANDRA GILLESPIE
Special to The Washington Post

Andra Gillespie is an assistant professor of political science at Emory University whose research examines political mobilization, race and competition between minority groups.

Despite the optimism that Barack Obama's election brings, I have been troubled by the simplicity with which some view this dramatic event. It has been suggested, by some students at my university, by well-meaning adults, even by Stephen Colbert, that Obama's election spells the end of American racial and ethnic inequality.

Yet while his presidency will bring a significant step toward racial equality, it is naive to think that one election erases centuries of prejudice. Indeed, while overt racism may be nearly a thing of the past, some ingrained habits and features of our old racial regime are likely to be with us for years to come.

We Americans like getting things fast. From fast food to speed dating, we expect to have our needs met how we want, when we want. And while it would be wonderful to dispense with decades of awful history in one vote, a prejudice-free society takes years—and struggle—to cultivate.

I study race in my work as a political scientist, and I have come to fear that the symbolism of the Obama presidency lulls us into thinking that we no longer have to be on our guard against prejudice or inequality. Consider an exchange I had last summer, when I stopped at an antiques shop in Christiansburg, Va. The shop carried a few pieces of memorabilia that were troubling to me as a black woman, such as lawn jockeys and racist children's books, and I questioned the man running the store about them.

The dealer became defensive and attempted to deflect the criticism in my questions by responding that he was an Obama supporter and that his neighbors were black professionals. At that moment, I wondered whether "I voted for Obama" would eventually replace "Some of my best friends are black" as the standard, tired rationalization of anyone caught in a racist moment.

Yes, America has made tremendous racial progress in the past generation and a half. Very few people thought that a mere 43 years after blacks were fully enfranchised, a black man would become president of the United States. But the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow is long and deep; there is still much room for improvement.

Last fall, an Associated Press-Yahoo News poll conducted by Stanford University found that 40 percent of white Americans harbored some form of prejudice against blacks, such as believing that black people were lazy, violent or given to complaining. And these attitudes do not account for the disparities in health, education, income and wealth between blacks and whites that have been a constant feature of our society.

As president, Obama will no doubt be encouraged to do everything possible to eliminate the structural barriers that perpetuate inequality among racial groups. It is a goal everyone should support. But even he will not have the power to eradicate prejudice. That is our job. We move closer to the community that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of every time we embark upon those difficult conversations with friends, colleagues and acquaintances about race and inequality. And it is important that our country not use this election as a shortcut or a pass to keep from discussing race.

Just after Election Day, I sent an e-mail to friends and acquaintances around the country soliciting recollections about the tone of their post-election conversations. I also participated in a few public forums immediately after the election in which people spontaneously shared similar stories. Many of my acquaintances encountered people of all races, colors and creeds who were truly excited about the election's outcome. But a significant minority confronted racial resentment. Several blacks recounted that some normally friendly white acquaintances and co-workers actually refused to speak to them on Nov. 5. I heard stories about more overt racism, vandalism and threats.

This was America in 2008.

Those unfortunate experiences highlight the fact that when it comes to race, many people, myself included, either preach to the choir or retreat to a tense silence when facing people with whom we disagree. Neither of these stances is really productive for racial reconciliation. We cannot move past race if we refuse to talk about it or if we discuss the subject only in our own, ethnically or ideologically homogenous social networks. And, unfortunately, we cannot move past race simply by electing diverse people to office.

When I saw the racist memorabilia in that antiques shop, I could have left the store in tears or berated the shopkeeper with gusto. Instead, I engaged him in a discussion about racial imagery. I hope that we both learned something from the conversation. He had not known much about the role of certain racial tropes in American literary history, and I did not know much about the racial history of that region.

When I left the store, I appreciated that while we may not have agreed on everything, we could at least respect each other's perspectives.

These kinds of discussions must occur regularly if we are to have a just, equal society. When Obama burst onto the national stage in 2004 with a speech at the Democratic National Convention, he said that we are our brother's keepers and that government could not do everything for us. Our attitude toward racial reconciliation should reflect that sentiment. Obama must lead the charge toward eradicating systemic racism, but it is our job to stamp out prejudice one conversation at a time.

Letters to the Editor

Susanna of Alabama meets Oh Oh Bama

The first stanza and refrain of Stephen Foster's *Oh, Susanna* reflects the minstrel tradition of the 1840s, a thick mock African-American dialect used by white folks on vaudeville with faces painted black:

I came from Alabama wid my banjo on my knee,
I'm g'wan to Louisiana, my true love for to see
It raind all night the day I left, the weather it was dry
The sun so hot I frose to death; Susanna, don't you cry.
Oh! Susanna Oh! don't you cry for me
I've come from Alabama
Wid mi banjo on my knee.

The song was heralded as the nation's second national anthem, popularly promoted by the West Coast's forty-niners of the California gold rush. The peppy tune followed many pedagogical lessons, not the least of which were from the teachers that the United States sent to territories on its Westward, ho! toward Manila and onward to Mumbai.

No Boy and Girl Scout camper around a bonfire would miss out on the tune, and Hollywood's Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Walter Brennan, Buddy Ebsen would get the world snapping its fingers and strumming its banjo to this polka-like beat and rhythm. Elmer Fudd and Bugs Bunny, and the Clampetts of Beverly Hills would commit the *coup d'grace* and consign the song into the global repertoire of recognizable tunes.

The songs seldom heard second stanza, especially after the Civil War, goes:

I jump'd aboard the telegraph and trabbled down de ribber,
De lectrick fluid magnified, and kill'd five hundred Nigga.
De bulgine bust and de hoss ran off, I really thought I'd die;
I shut my eyes to hold my bref -- Susanna don't you cry.

In the same era that *Oh, Susanna* became famous, the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Roger Taney would pen the majority opinion on the Dred Scott v. Sanford case. A former slave living free in Illinois moves to Missouri, and was taken back as a slave. Dred Scott sues for his freedom rights under the American Constitution. Sandford prevailed.

Of the West African descendants, Taney wrote: *"They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery. . . . He was bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it."*

Frederick Douglass was pleased that at least, opposition to the decision would propel the issue of slavery to the forefront. Abraham Lincoln did pick up the cudgels and would accuse the Democratic Party of cuddling the slave owners of the South.

Our very own Ambrose Bennett more than a century later would pose under a portrait of the Supreme Court Justice Taney, and understandably, though perhaps, ungraciously, produced the universal symbol of disdain and disgust, the raised middle finger!

Mid-March 2008, when the incendiary racial language of Obama's former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, became more divisive than the civility of silence then practiced by the presidential candidates, Obama rose above the fray and delivered what is now dubbed his race speech in the Independence Hall of Philadelphia.

Here was a man who would not hesitate to confront the issue and do so with intelligence and evidence of erudition. Even lawyer John W. Dean of the Watergate fame, writing on *FindLaw Writ*, had this to say: "With his speech addressing race in America, Obama has done something that few politicians are willing to do: speak with compelling intellectual honesty. Rather than fuzzy-up difficult and troubling questions about race, he confronted them directly. Rather than avoiding issues that are typically ignored, he brought them forward for public discussion. Most strikingly, he did this with nuance, great tact, and conspicuous intelligence."

Race is a given in our global genetics. Melanin production has been noted as a body defense to ultraviolet rays from the sun in the environment. Racism and racialism is humanity's codification of social stratification based on the color of one's skin. In 10,000 years of human civilization, we are now just raising the question on whether these codifications may now be discarded. Or, at least, expunged from legal codes and cultural practices.

As late as 1968, as a student of Southern United Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, the same year teacher Laura Lane Welch—who became GWB first's lady—would receive her bachelor's degree, several students and I spent a whole semester boycotting and protesting a washateria in the shadows of the Central Expressway Hilton because it had a prominently displayed front sign, accompanied by the Confederacy flag, that said: "for WHITES only."

Forty years later, we would hear a candidate speak with candor, and without apology: "I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. I was raised with the help of a white grandfather who survived a Depression to serve in Patton's Army during World War II and a white grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line at Fort Leavenworth while he was overseas. I've gone to some of the best schools in America and lived in one of the world's poorest nations. I am married to a black American who carries within her the blood of slaves and slave owners—an inheritance we pass on to our two precious daughters. I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles and cousins, of every race and every hue, scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

It's a story that hasn't made me the most conventional candidate. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts—that out of many, we are truly one."

Hail to the Chief! Michelle. Malia. Sasha. And the throng that partied around D.C. this weekend, on to Tuesday. But as Joe Biden was quick to point out, on Wednesday, the work on the New Declaration of Independence begins again.

Oh Oh Bama, we cry our joys with thee,
Yes, we come from Mariana, our islands do serve tea!

Jaime Vergara
via e-mail

Making myself clear

I notice that the president of TaoTao Tano is now a business adviser, but what does he have to show to qualify him for that position? His "simple solution" advice to the mayor in regards to the illegal cockfight operators is so pathetic. For an educated person as he claims to be, he should know that the mayor is only following the law as mandated by the Legislature.

I notice that this guy will attack and accuse anyone for his political ambition. And I despise his accusation that the mayor is promoting my business. First of all, I am not the license holder but we do own the facility. The present license holder who won the bid to operate with the option to put up their own facility or do so as they please chose to rent my facility. When the mayor made the statement about the only place authorized to operate a cockpit, he was referring to the license holder and not necessarily our facility. In fact, the present license holder is relocating at the end of the month. This only shows that the mayor is not in control. For his information, my facility was built with the intent of continuously bidding for the license. Of course, we lost the bid and the facility became available but it didn't mean that the winning bidder had to operate at our facility.

While I will not comment on his remarks about the mayor's activities and investigation, I will not allow him to drag us in the mud for his gratification and it is not fair either to accuse the mayor of such. And I don't know how it will help those illegal operators should the government designate a land for that purpose. It will be like a "dog-eat-dog" business. Besides, does he really want the government to be in business?

If the Taotao Tano president feels that the $10,000 minimum bid is not adequate, then perhaps he should write to the Legislature to amend it. Frankly, I don't see anything wrong with the present set up. It is those who choose to operate illegally that are the problem. They have no business operating in the first place. And they know that they are just robbing the present license holder. These guys have all the opportunity to participate in the bid but they chose not to. Who in their right mind will commit tens of thousands of dollars if they can operate it for free because the authorities are not interested in prosecuting? I hope I cleared myself to the Taotao Tano president.

Nick Sablan
Garapan, Saipan

Business

4Q earnings could indicate economy's direction

NEW YORK (AP)—As hundreds of fourth-quarter earnings reports stream in this week, Wall Street's reaction will turn on companies' answers to one question: When will the recession end?

"Not soon" is what the market heard last week. Big banks posted ugly numbers and told investors they were still struggling with rickety balance sheets. That revived fears that the economic recovery that some analysts have forecast for the second half of the year won't materialize.

The market has largely written off the first half of 2009. Now, stocks could take a beating if companies lead investors to believe a recovery will be pushed back to 2010.

Of the 42 companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index that have reported results for the October-December quarter, 25 have fallen short of Wall Street's already reduced forecasts, according to S&P.

But some analysts believe that investors, who buy and sell based on how they think the economy will be faring six to nine months from now, will eventually stop reacting negatively to disappointing data.

"There will be more bad economic news. I don't think we're out of the woods on layoffs and earnings announcements but at some point it's all factored in," said John Dorfman, chairman of Thunderstorm Capital LLC in Boston.

He said the 50 percent drop in the S&P 500 index from its October 2007 high to an 11-year low on Nov. 20 gives him hope that the market will start to look past bad news and find early signs the economy is stabilizing.

"The sentiment is now so gloomy," he said. "It's the natural turning of the economic cycle. It's mysterious when it's going down. You think 'How can it ever turn?' But it always does."

This week, the range of industries issuing reports and 2009 outlooks is broad, from technology companies to airlines to regional banks. Google Inc., United Airways parent UAL Corp. and US Bancorp all plan to release results. Big names including General Electric Co., Microsoft Corp. and Johnson & Johnson are also due and, more important, so are their comments about the state of their businesses.

It's a shortened week with markets closed Monday for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. And Tuesday some of investors' attention will be diverted to Washington with the inauguration of President-elect Barack Obama.

The new administration could give stocks a bounce, market watchers say, as Obama prepares to dispense the second half of the government's $700 billion financial bailout fund and awaits passage of an $825 billion stimulus package that is fast making its way through Congress.

AP

Specialist Damen Watson, second from right, is surrounded by traders at the post that handles MasterCard on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange at the close of trading Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2009.

Billionaire Buffett says US in 'economic Pearl Harbor'

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—Billionaire investor Warren Buffett says the U.S. is engaged in an "economic Pearl Harbor."

In an interview that aired Sunday on "Dateline NBC," the chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Inc. said the nation's economic situation is not as bad at World War II or the Great Depression, but it's still pretty severe.

Buffett said Americans are in a cycle of fear, "which leads to people not wanting to spend and not wanting to make investments, and that leads to more fear. We'll break out of it. It takes time."

Buffett's interview centered on President-elect Barack Obama and the tough task he faces in fixing the U.S. economy.

"You couldn't have anybody better in charge," the Omaha resident said of Obama, who'll be sworn into office on Tuesday.

As one of Obama's economic advisers, Buffett said the president-elect listens to what his advisers say, but ultimately comes up with better ideas.

He predicted that Obama will be able to convey the severity of the economic situation to the American people and explain their part in alleviating it.

As to how long the crisis would continue, Buffett said he didn't know.

"It's never paid to bet against America," he said. "We come through things, but its not always a smooth ride."

Omaha-based Berkshire owns a diverse mix of more than 60 companies, including insurance, furniture, carpet, jewelry, restaurants and utility businesses. And it has major investments in such companies as Wells Fargo & Co. and Coca-Cola Co.

UK: Banks to get more cash if they pass it on

LONDON (AP)—Britain is bailing out its banks. Again.

Only three months after the government put 37 billion pounds into shoring up its shattered financial system, Britain is putting billions more into an insurance plan intended to get banks lending again.

At the root of the problem lies what treasury chief Alistair Darling said Sunday were "blockages in the system" that have prevented the money pumped into the financial sector from seeping into the wider economy. Interest rates on mortgages remain high and the number of loans remains low. With banks poised to return dismal earnings reports, Britain is again putting up taxpayer money to guarantee their wobbly balance sheets.

But this time, Darling says, that money will have to be passed on. The chancellor told Sky News television that banks would have to "enter into binding agreements to make sure that, if we put additional money into the system, it goes to the people and businesses it is designed to support."

Just how much money Darling is prepared to put on the table isn't clear.

A government official said the British treasury was preparing an insurance plan for some of the weakest items on the banks' balance sheets. In return for a fee, the government would agree to guarantee risky loans and bad debt with taxpayers' money, the official said. If the loans went sour, the banks would be reimbursed from the public purse.

Although some media reports have put the size of the expected liability at up to 200 billion pounds ($300 billion) the official said he could not give a figure, saying many aspects of the plan were still being negotiated.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the information had not yet been released to the markets. He said a formal announcement was due before the markets opened Monday, and Darling and Prime Minister Gordon Brown were expected to address the issue at a news conference later in the day.

No sign of Fla. financier or his clients' millions

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP)—In this quaint seaside community, Arthur G. Nadel was looked upon as a trusted and generous philanthropist.

The 75-year-old hedge fund manager raked in high returns for his clients but left the luxury cars and the exorbitant lifestyle to others. So confident were investors in his ability to manage their money that they entrusted hundreds of thousands of dollars apiece to his care.

Now they're wondering where Nadel is and what he's done with their money.

The Sarasota Police Department had received at least seven complaints as of Sunday from investors, some of whom say they have lost upward of $700,000. It wasn't clear how much money was invested or how much might be missing, though one investor said the hedge fund had been worth as much as $350 million and might have been completely drained.

"I'm angry," Brad Lerner, a doctor who invested $500,000 with Nadel three years ago, said Sunday. "I'd like to see the truth come out and (the) money returned."

Nadel's family reported him missing Wednesday, and on Thursday, police found his green Subaru in an airport parking lot. He left a note for his family, in which he appeared to be "very distraught," the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office said.

A woman who answered the door Sunday at Nadel's home declined to identify herself.

Investigators continued to search for Nadel through the weekend.

"Sarasota is a good sized place, but it's actually a very small community of people," police Capt. Bill Spitler said. "Obviously we have white collar crime. But very few places have anything of this magnitude."

Nadel operated out of Scoop Management Inc., which has a modest office with burgundy awnings on Sarasota's Main Street. According to the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, his investors ranged from individuals to the local YMCA Foundation.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Oil falls to near $36 ahead of busy earnings week

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices fell to near $36 a barrel Monday in Asia as investors eyed a slew of U.S. corporate earnings this week for signs of weakening consumer demand amid the worst recession in decades. Light, sweet crude for February delivery was down 45 cents at $36.06 a barrel by early afternoon in Singapore in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract, which expires on Tuesday, rose $1.11 on Friday to settle at $36.51. The March contract was trading at $42.28 a barrel. Investors expect to glean more insight into the extent of the current downturn when hundreds of companies report fourth quarter results this week, including heavyweights Google Inc., US Bancorp, General Electric Co., Microsoft Corp. and Johnson & Johnson.

Report: New York to lead US cities in job losses

NEW YORK (AP)—Only five metropolitan areas in the U.S. will escape job losses this year, according to a forecast released Saturday by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. New York is expected to take the biggest hit as thousands of jobs are lost on Wall Street. Big financial firms are slashing workers as they cope with bad debt. Other companies have gone under, like Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., which filed for bankruptcy in September. The New York area is expected to lose 181,000 jobs in 2009, the report said. Consulting company IHS Global Insight produced the report for the group. The Los Angeles area is expected to see 164,000 lost jobs, in part because of the huge drop in home prices that has punctured the California economy. After New York and Los Angeles, the Miami area is expected to see the greatest loss, with a decline of 85,000 jobs. Chicago and the surrounding area are next, with losses projected at 80,000.

Reports: Carlos Slim may boost stake in NY Times

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Times Co. is in talks with billionaire Carlos Slim Helu about a possible investment of hundreds of millions of dollars that could help the newspaper publisher to meet debt payments, according to a Wall Street Journal report citing anonymous sources Saturday. A spokeswoman for The New York Times declined to comment Sunday. Helu's representatives could not be immediately reached for comment. The Journal said no deal is set and that discussions between the paper and Slim, the owner of Mexico's telephone giant Telmex, could still collapse. Other media outlets, also citing on anonymous sources, reported that talks were taking place. The Times has about $46 million in cash and $1.1 billion in debt as of the end of September, the Journal reported. A $400 million credit facility expires in May.

Nation

‘Anything possible,’ Obama tells joyous crowd

WASHINGTON (AP)—Two days from the White House, President-elect Barack Obama joined a vast throng Sunday at a joyous pre-inauguration celebration staged among marble monuments to past heroes. “Anything is possible in America,” declared the man who will confront economic crisis and two wars when he takes office.

“Despite the enormity of the task that lies ahead, I stand here today as hopeful as ever that the United States of America will endure—that it will prevail, that the dream of our founders will live on in our time,” the president-elect said at the conclusion of a musical extravaganza that featured U2, Beyonce, Bruce Springsteen and a host of other stars.

Obama and his family held the seats of honor at the event, and a crowd of tens of thousands spilled from the base of the Lincoln Memorial toward the Washington Monument several blocks away in the cold, gray afternoon of mid-January.

It was the high point of a full day of pre-inaugural events that included a wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery and a morning church service where children recalled the life of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

Obama’s motorcade drew ever-larger crowds as the day wore on and he and his wife, Michelle, and their children Sasha and Malia crisscrossed the city.

“Just another typical Sunday,” deadpanned the Rev. Derrick Harkins, pastor at the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, where the soon-to-be first family prayed.

Of course it was anything but—a run-up, in fact, to the first inauguration of an African-American president in a nation founded by slave-owners.

Obama’s aides said he was readying an inaugural address that would stress twin themes of responsibility and accountability, and they predicted he would devote his first week in office to economic recovery, setting in motion a 16-month troop withdrawal from Iraq and decreeing a code of ethics for his administration.

AP

President-elect Barack Obama speaks at the Lincoln Memorial during an inaugural concert in Washington , Sunday, Jan. 18, 2009.

With the economy weak and growing weaker, banks in trouble and joblessness rising, Obama’s team was careful to warn against any expectation that he would be a miracle worker once in office. “I think it’s fair to say that it’s going to take not months but years to really turn this around,” said David Axelrod, a political strategist expected to have White House space mere paces from the Oval Office.

Obama said as much in his own brief remarks. “I won’t pretend that meeting any one of these challenges will be easy. It will take more than a month or a year, and it will likely take many,” he said.

He stood alone at the base of the steps before the statue of a seated Lincoln looking out at a crowd every bit as large as the one King addressed a generation earlier in his “I have a dream” speech that was a defining moment of the civil rights era.

An even larger audience is forecast for the inauguration outside the Capitol on Tuesday, with estimates running into the millions. Agencies in charge of logistics and security said they would enforce a ban on personal auto traffic across the Potomac River bridges from Virginia into Washington and seal off a large portion of the downtown area. Access to buildings along the Inaugural parade route down Pennsylvania Avenue was limited to those who gained Secret Service approval in advance.

Obama’s day began at the Tomb of he Unknowns at Arlington National cemetery, where he and Vice President-elect Joseph Biden laid a wreath in memory of fallen heroes. The two men placed their hands over their hearts as a uniformed bugler played taps in a somber opening to a festive day.

The scene was quite different at the church a few miles away, where the congregation erupted in applause when Obama and his family walked to their seats.

“Understand that God has prepared you, and God has placed you, and God will not forsake you,” Harkins told the incoming president.

NTSB says US Airways’ jet engines lost power together

NEW YORK (AP)—The flight data recorder of the US Airways jet that landed in the Hudson River shows both engines lost power simultaneously, investigators said Sunday.

Information from the flight recorders on the doomed aircraft was released as investigators worked to remove its fuel. After that is completed, officials hope to move the damaged plane off the river by the end of the day.

“Defueling is a pretty intricate operation, not without risk,” Kitty Higgins of the National Transportation Safety Board said at an afternoon briefing on the investigation.

The crippled plane, hoisted from the river late Saturday, remains on top of a barge moored to a seawall in Manhattan a few blocks from the World Trade Center site.

Higgins said the recorders showed that Flight 1549 reached a maximum altitude of 3,200 feet before losing power simultaneously in both engines before its splash-landing Thursday afternoon.

Higgins recounted excerpts from communications captured by the cockpit voice recorder beginning 90 seconds after takeoff, when the captain made a remark to the co-pilot about birds.

One second later, she said, “the sound of thumps and a rapid decrease in engine sounds” could be heard.

“The captain makes a radio call to (Air Traffic Control) calling Mayday, and reports that they hit birds, lost both engines and were returning to LaGuardia” Airport, she said.

Higgins said the accounts on the cockpit voice recorder were consistent with interviews with the flight crew. She also praised the crew.

“Miracles happen because a lot of everyday things happen for years and years and years,” she said. “These people knew what they were supposed to do and they did it and as a result, nobody lost their life.”

Higgins also said ice floes in the Hudson were hampering the search for the left engine, which separated from the aircraft and sank to the bottom of the river.

“The concern is... even putting down the sonar equipment and the rove vehicle, they would be damaged by the ice. It’s too dangerous for a diver,” she said.

Future of abstinence-only funding is in limbo

NEW YORK (AP)—With the exit of the Bush administration, critics of abstinence-only sex education will be making an aggressive push to cut off federal funding for what they consider an ineffective, sometimes harmful program.

How quickly and completely they reach their goal is uncertain, however, as conservative supporters of abstinence education lobby Congress and President-elect Barack Obama to preserve at least some of the funding, which now totals $176 million a year.

And even if federal funding is halted, some states—such as Georgia—are determined to keep abstinence programs going on their own, ensuring that this front in the culture wars will remain active.

Obama is considered an advocate of comprehensive sex education, which—unlike abstinence-only curriculum—includes advice to young people about using contraceptives if they do engage in sexual activity. However, Obama spokesman Tommy Vietor declined to elaborate on what the new president would propose in his own budget plan.

Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of American, depicted the federal abstinence-only program as “an utter failure that has wasted more than $1.5 billion” over the past decade. Like other critics, she noted that several major studies—including a federally funded review—have found no evidence that the abstinence-only approach works in deterring teen sex.

“Talking with Obama, he totally understands the need for young people to have comprehensive sex education—they need information that protects their health,” Richards said. “I hope that will be the position of the administration, but when Congress gets involved, sometimes things get more complicated.”

Even after Democrats took control of Congress in the 2006 elections, liberals lacked the votes to end abstinence-only funding, and President George Bush stuck by his strong support for it.

But Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., said the 2008 elections not only put Obama in the White House but also increased the ranks of senators and representatives who share her opposition to funding abstinence education.

“We believe the amount of money that goes into it would be so much better used on things to prevent unwanted pregnancies,” she said. “I think we’ll have enough votes to deal with it.”

ACROSS THE NATION

Mich. dad told to pay for child’s birth or wed mom

FLINT, Mich. (AP)—The state of Michigan is giving a father a choice: pay the medical cost of his daughter’s birth or marry the girl’s mother. Gary Johnson was billed $3,800 for the birth of his daughter JaeLyn, The Flint Journal reported in Sunday online editions. Johnson is not married to the child’s mother, Rebecca Witt. The Michigan Legislature amended the state’s paternity act five years ago to waive birthing costs for a father, if he married the child’s mother. A year later, Witt gave birth to JaeLyn. The state paid for the hospital costs because Witt was on Medicaid at the time and is now trying to recover the money. Jack Battles, the Genesee County Friend of the Court, said the law is an incentive to maintain the sanctity of marriage. “It’s totally up to them,” said Battles, whose office enforces paternity rulings, child support and other aspects of family law. Until Johnson can produce a marriage license, “they have to pay.”

Parts of monster truck examined after boy’s death

TACOMA, Wash. (AP)—Investigators were examining pieces of the drive train from an oversized truck Sunday to learn why parts tore off the truck and struck and killed a 6-year-old boy and injured another spectator at a monster truck show. Witnesses described the boy, Sebastian Hizey, being struck in the head by a Frisbee-sized chunk of metal that tore off a truck doing doughnuts during the Monster Jam show Friday night in the Tacoma Dome. Police gathered loose parts of the drive train and the drive train loop, a special monster truck device that is supposed to hold the drive train on the vehicle, Bill Easterling, senior operations director for Feld Motor Sports of Aurora, Ill., told The Associated Press on Sunday. He said he could give no further details or description of the loose parts, including where they were found. “I’ve never seen the loop or the drive shaft parts come off like this,” said Easterling, whose company is the promoter of the show.

Ohio mother pleads insanity in 2 girls’ drownings

CLEVELAND (AP)—A Cleveland woman accused of drowning her two daughters in a bathtub has changed her plea to not guilty by reason of insanity. Amber Hill also waived her right to a jury trial Thursday. A panel of three Cuyahoga County judges will hear her case beginning Tuesday. The 23-year-old mother previously had pleaded not guilty to aggravated murder in the October 2007 deaths of her children. The girls were ages 2 and 4. Prosecutor Bill Mason is seeking the death penalty. Prosecutor’s office spokesman Ryan Miday said Sunday that Hill was not offered a plea deal. Authorities haven’t discussed a motive and say Hill had no history of neglecting the girls.

Asia

China reports second bird flu death this year

BEIJING (AP)—A woman in eastern China has died from the H5N1 strain of bird flu, the Health Ministry said, the second death from the virus this year as the country's biggest festive season approaches and contact with poultry increases.

The woman, whose surname was Zhang, lived in Jinan, the capital of Shandong province, and died Saturday after falling sick on Jan. 5, the ministry said on its Web site late Sunday. The notice did not say how Zhang, 27, contracted the virus or give other details.

A man who answered the telephone at the Shandong health department refused to comment and hung up. A woman at the Jinan health bureau said the official in charge was not available.

The fatality comes less than two weeks after a 19-year-old woman died from the H5N1 virus in a Beijing hospital after buying and cleaning ducks in a market in a neighboring province. It was the first death from bird flu since last February.

Also Monday, a 2-year-old girl sickened by H5N1 was in critical condition in the northern province of Shanxi.

The cases come at a worrisome time for Chinese authorities as tens of millions of people are on the move between cities and rural hometowns for Lunar New Year, the country's biggest holiday, which begins on Jan. 26.

Dishes prepared from freshly slaughtered chicken and duck feature prominently in celebration feasts. This means a potentially greater risk of exposure to sick birds as people shop in markets and handle poultry or when the birds are transported to be sold, the World Health Organization said.

Health Ministry spokesman Mao Qun'an said last week that the public should minimize contact with poultry, especially sick or dead ones, and that medical institutions should step up surveillance of flu cases, especially during the New Year holiday.

The Agriculture Ministry also ordered that monitoring of epidemics be tightened and that all poultry be properly vaccinated. In a notice released Sunday night, it also said it would increase checks across the country and at borders.

Health officials say that the cold months can bring an increase in bird flu cases because the H5N1 virus can survive longer in cold weather and have a bigger chance of infecting poultry - and possibly humans. Winter is also when many people in rural areas bring live poultry into their homes to protect them from the cold.

Scientists have warned that if outbreaks among poultry are not controlled, the virus may mutate into a form more easily passed between people, potentially resulting in millions of deaths. China, which raises more poultry than any other country, has vowed to aggressively fight the virus.

Meanwhile, the 2-year-old girl was in critical condition after testing positive for H5N1. She fell ill on Jan. 7 in central Hunan province and was taken to a hospital by her grandparents four days later after she returned home to Shanxi, the Health Ministry said.

Palm oil frenzy threatens to wipe out orangutans

TANJUNG PUTING NATIONAL PARK, Indonesia (AP)—Hoping to unravel the mysteries of human origin, anthropologist Louis Leakey sent three young women to Africa and Asia to study our closest relatives: It was chimpanzees for Jane Goodall, mountain gorillas for Dian Fossey and the elusive, solitary orangutans for Birute Mary Galdikas.

Nearly four decades later, 62-year-old Galdikas, the least famous of his "angels," is the only one still at it. And the red apes she studies in Indonesia are on the verge of extinction because forests are being clear-cut and burned to make way for lucrative palm oil plantations.

Galdikas worries many questions may never be answered. How long do orangutans live in the wild? How far do the males roam? And how many mates do they have in their lifetime?

"I try not to get depressed, I try not to get burned out," says the Canadian scientist, pulling a wide-rimmed jungle hat over her shoulder-length gray hair in Tanjung Puting National Park. She gently leans over to pick up a tiny orangutan, orphaned when his mother was caught raiding crops.

"But when you get up in the air you start gasping in horror; there's nothing but palm oil in an area that used to be plush rain forest. Elsewhere, there's burned-out land, which now extends even within the borders of the park."

The demand for palm oil is rising in the U.S. and Europe because it is touted as a "clean" alternative to fuel. Indonesia is the world's top producer of palm oil, and prices have jumped by almost 70 percent in the last year.

But palm oil plantations devastate the forest and create a monoculture on the land, in which orangutans cannot survive. Over the years, Galdikas has fought off loggers, poachers and miners, but nothing has posed as great a threat to her "babies" as palm oil.

There are only an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 orangutans left in the wild, 90 percent of them in Indonesia, said Serge Wich, a scientist at the Great Ape Trust of Iowa. Most live in small, scattered populations that cannot take the onslaught on the forests much longer.

Trees are being cut at a rate of 300 football fields every hour. And massive land-clearing fires have turned the country into one of the top emitters of carbon.

Tanjung Puting, which has 1,600 square miles, clings precariously to the southern tip of Borneo island. Its 6,000 orangutans—one of the two largest populations on the planet, together with the nearby Sebangau National Park—are less vulnerable to diseases and fires.

ASIAN BRIEFS

RP police identify 3 suspects sought in kidnapping of Red Cross workers

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Police have identified at least three people believed to have kidnapped three Red Cross workers in the southern Philippines and turned them over to al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf gunmen, an official said Sunday. At least 1,000 marines and police have been involved in the search for the captive Red Cross Workers—Andreas Notter, 38, of Switzerland; Eugenio Vagni, 62, of Italy; and Mary Jean Lacaba, 37, of the Philippines—in the worst hostage crisis to hit Jolo in years. The military said Sunday that it will clamp down on information about its rescue effort to avoid "unnecessarily risking the safety of the victims." The kidnappers stopped a car at gunpoint Thursday near the provincial capital of Jolo Island and abducted the International Committee of the Red Cross workers from Switzerland, Italy and the Philippines, Jolo provincial police chief Julasirim Kasim said.

China to mark defeat of Tibetan rebellion

BEIJING (AP)—Tibet's Communist Party-controlled legislature has voted to create a holiday to mark China's defeat of a pro-independence uprising 50 years ago in the Himalayan region, calling it a day of liberation from feudalism, state media reported Monday. The 382 legislators attending the session unanimously voted to designate March 28 as "Serf Liberation Day," the official Xinhua News Agency said, citing Legqog, director of the Standing Committee of the Tibetan Autonomous Regional People's Congress. Like many Tibetans, Legqog uses a single name. The politically sensitive date marks the flight of Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, into exile in India as Chinese troops attacked in March 1959. On March 28 of that year, Beijing announced the dissolution of the Tibetan government and the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region under Communist rule.

World

Israeli army leaving Gaza in cease-fire with Hamas

AP

A rainbow is seen over the northern Gaza Strip, from the Israel-Gaza Border, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2009.

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israeli troops, some smiling and dancing, began to withdraw from Gaza Sunday after their government and Hamas militants declared an end to a three-week war. But neither side achieved long-term goals, and the burden of consolidating the fragile calm fell to world leaders.

The truce brought relief to Gaza's citizens, who took stock of the devastation in relative safety for the first time since Israel launched the offensive on Dec. 27. And it brought more trauma, as rescue workers in surgical masks ventured into what were once no-go areas and pulled 100 bodies from buildings pulverized by bombs.

"We've pulled out my nephew, but I don't know how many are still under there," Zayed Hadar said as he sifted through the rubble of his flattened home in the northern town of Jebaliya.

Tension eased in southern Israel, the target of Palestinian rocket fire, even though Hamas launched nearly 20 rockets in a final salvo before announcing a cease-fire. Three Israelis were lightly wounded, while two Palestinians were killed in last-minute fighting, medics said.

Israel and Hamas do not recognize each other and ended up separately declaring cease-fires 12 hours apart after strenuous efforts by Egyptian mediators to get an agreement. Israel first announced a unilateral cease-fire that took effect early Sunday, with Hamas initially vowing to keep fighting until all troops left Gaza. Later Sunday, Hamas also said it would hold its fire to give Israeli forces time to pull out.

Al-Sadr's followers eye comeback in Jan. 31 vote

AMARAH, Iraq (AP)—Followers of anti-American Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr hope to win back their position as a major force in this month's regional elections after a string of military and political setbacks last year.

Even modest success in the Jan. 31 vote for ruling provincial councils could position the Sadrists as coalition partners in key southern provinces, where a large number of candidates makes it unlikely any single party can win on its own.

Anything short of that could relegate the once formidable al-Sadr to political irrelevance—something unthinkable a year ago when his fearsome Mahdi Army militia wielded vast power in Shiite areas of Iraq.

"This month's elections will decide who remains in the political arena and who will go into oblivion," said senior Sadrist lawmaker Hassan al-Rubaie. "If we fail to do well, our movement could fragment, and some of its key figures could be lured away by rival blocs trying to destroy us."

Top Sadrist officials in key southern cities—Basra, Amarah and Najaf—spoke confidently about their election prospects during interviews with The Associated Press.

But they fear that authorities may step up arrests of al-Sadr's supporters and campaign workers in response to his call for attacks on U.S. forces in retaliation for Israel's offensive in Gaza.

The Sadrists also face a strong threat from the country's two largest Shiite parties—the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council and the Dawa party of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Both are vigorously campaigning to retain their grip on the south and prevent any inroads by al-Sadr's group, which has been significantly weakened since the heady days when it held sway in Shiite areas of Baghdad and southern Iraq.

Mexican collapse? Drug wars worry some Americans

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Indiscriminate kidnappings. Nearly daily beheadings. Gangs that mock and kill government agents.

This isn't Iraq or Pakistan. It's Mexico, which the U.S. government and a growing number of experts say is becoming one of the world's biggest security risks.

The prospect that America's southern neighbor could melt into lawlessness provides an unexpected challenge to Barack Obama's new government. In its latest report anticipating possible global security risks, the U.S. Joint Forces Command lumps Mexico and Pakistan together as being at risk of a "rapid and sudden collapse."

"The Mexican possibility may seem less likely, but the government, its politicians, police and judicial infrastructure are all under sustained assault and pressure by criminal gangs and drug cartels," the command said in the report published Nov. 25.

"How that internal conflict turns out over the next several years will have a major impact on the stability of the Mexican state."

Retiring CIA chief Michael Hayden told reporters on Friday that that Mexico could rank alongside Iran as a challenge for Obama—perhaps a greater problem than Iraq.

The U.S. Justice Department said last month that Mexican gangs are the "biggest organized crime threat to the United States." National security adviser Stephen Hadley said last week that the worsening violence threatens Mexico's very democracy.

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff recently told The New York Times he ordered additional border security plans to be drawn up this summer as kidnappings and killings spilled into the U.S.

Overdrive

Hyundai Genesis named 2009 North American Car of the Year

DETROIT—After months of expert test-drives, critical acclaim and independent awards, the Hyundai Genesis took top honors in the most exclusive award in North America when it was named the 2009 North American Car of the Year.

A jury of 50 independent automotive journalists evaluated all the new cars introduced last year and chose the 2009 Hyundai Genesis as the best new model. The award was announced at a news conference at the 2009 North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

"Genesis represents everything we've learned so far about engineering great automobiles—and we're delighted that the judges have recognized the good work of our R&D teams," said John Krafcik, Hyundai Motor America acting president and chief executive officer. "And we're not stopping here…Genesis will share company in Hyundai showrooms this spring with its rear-wheel drive platform mate, the Genesis Coupe."

Triple J Motors is the licensed distributor of Hyundai in the Northern Mariana Islands. According to general manager Randy Steele, the award-winning Genesis sedan is now in stock while the Genesis Coupe is only a few weeks away from arrival on Saipan.

This year the jurors for the award considered more than 50 new vehicles before selecting the top three cars and top three trucks.

The North American Car of the Year award is decided by a jury of 50 independent, full-time automotive journalists from the United States and Canada. Candidates are judged on a number of factors including innovation, design, safety, handling, driver satisfaction and value for the dollar. ***(PR)***

2009 AUDI TT 3.2 QUATTRO

Luxurious roadster delivers smiles

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The difference between rich and poor consumers is the manner in which their confidence is rewarded. That much became clear to me and my associate for vehicle evaluations, Ria Manglapus, on a recent visit to Audi USA headquarters in Herndon, Va.

Audi recently moved its U.S. headquarters from the Detroit area to the Washington metropolitan area. So it was only fitting that we from The Washington Post drop by to say "hello." Besides, Audi wanted to show off its latest TT roadster. We find that sort of thing hard to resist.

But on the way over, we fell into conversation about the economy—the generally dismal nature of it and how it was depressing car sales with one hand and forcing buyers who remained in the market toward more pedestrian, practical choices with the other. Ria and I were resigning ourselves to a 2009 filled with economy cars. The trip to Audi, then, was a kind of personal stimulus package to help keep us excited about this thing we call the automobile.

It was worth it.

The economy's downward turn threatens to transform the automobile into what aggressive pragmatists have always wanted it to be—a commodity, nothing more or less, something capable of hauling people and their stuff the longest possible distances at the lowest possible prices.

There is value in that virtue. But it isn't why people who love driving love driving. It isn't why consumers who can afford to spend more money in pursuit of that love often spend it on cars such as the 2009 Audi TT 3.2 Quattro roadster, which we drove in Herndon and environs.

There is little that anyone can deem practical or pragmatic about the TT 3.2 Quattro. It is expensive, with a base price in excess of $45,000. It can carry two people and not much of their luggage. It drinks premium unleaded gasoline and does so at the rather alarming rate—for a little two-seater—of 18 miles per gallon in the city and 24 miles per gallon on the highway.

But if you can accept and afford all of that, you'll fall madly in love with the TT 3.2 Quattro. Driving it is akin to writing with the finest, most perfectly balanced pen. It feels that good in hand.

The car's 3.2-liter, 250-horsepower V-6 runs smoothly, producing an authoritative exhaust note without ever sounding like or behaving as a bully. It just wants to have fun, which it does quite easily with the assistance of a six-speed transmission that can be shifted automatically or manually.

There's something else:

Roadsters—small, two-seat, two-door cars with convertible tops—often are fair-weather automobiles, preferably driven in the glory days of spring and summer. They tend to provide more misery than comfort in cold, inclement weather. But the TT 3.2 Quattro is an all-weather smile machine.

The power convertible roof rises or falls in seconds. When it and the side windows are raised, it locks tightly in place, sealing out cold and moisture. And the "Quattro" part of the TT's name means that the car is all-wheel-drive, which means it delivers admirable traction on most winter-compromised roads.

The caveat applies to ice. The TT 3.2 Quattro will get you through moderate-to-heavy rainfalls, assuming the roads are draining well. And it will get you through moderate snowfalls. But untreated, icy roads can cause any vehicle to skid out of control.

But all said, it's a beautiful car with a well-sculpted body and an impeccably crafted interior—the latter of which can be tailored to a buyer's taste. Our car quite literally fit like a glove, an expensively knitted baseball glove using the finest rawhide.

It isn't something that most of us would buy. But the rich are different from most of us. This is a very special little car, a motorized bauble for them. It was fun playing with it for a while.

THE WASHINGTON POST

WHEELS AUDI: The 2009 Audi TT 3.2 Quattro, a compact luxury roadster with all-wheel-drive, looks hot and turns heads. But its gas mileage (18 mpg, city) is not much to write home about.

NUTS & BOLTS

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

COMPLAINT
We see no reason why a car this small, even one with a spunky V-6, can't do better than 18 miles per gallon in the city and 24 miles per gallon on the highway. Is 30 mpg for something like this, at least in highway driving, asking too much?

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING
The TT 3.2 Quattro gets excellent marks in all three categories. The car is a driver's delight.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT
It looks hot and turns heads.

BODY STYLE/LAYOUT
The TT 3.2 Quattro is a compact luxury roadster with a front, transverse-mounted engine and all-wheel-drive. It has two seats, two side doors and a power, fabric convertible roof.

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION
The 3.2-liter, 24-valve V-6 develops 250 horsepower at 6,300 revolutions per minute and 236 foot-pounds of torque at 2,500 revolutions per minute. The engine is mated to a six-speed transmission that can be shifted automatically or manually.

CAPACITIES
There are seats for two people. There's enough luggage space for two, soft-pack overnight bags. The fuel tank holds 15.9 gallons of required premium unleaded gasoline.

MILEAGE
Eighteen miles per gallon in the city and 24 mpg on the highway — that's not much to write home about.

SAFETY
Standard equipment includes four-wheel disc brakes with antilock control, side air bags, electronic stability and traction control.

PRICE
The base price on the 2009 Audi TT 3.2 Quattro roadster (convertible) is $46,540. Dealer's invoice price on that model is $43,281. Price as tested is $49,840 (including $2,000 for the "baseball optic leather" package and $475 for metallic and pearl effect paints) and an $825 destination charge. Dealer's price as tested is $46,407. Prices are sourced from Audi and Edmunds.com.

PURSE-STRINGS NOTE
It's a wonderful toy. Compare with BMW Z4, Nissan 350-Z, Mercedes-Benz SLK-Class.

Life & Style

On historic steps, Obama's rise celebrated in song

Under the gaze of Abraham Lincoln's imposing statue, Bruce Springsteen belted out "Come on up for the rising," a martial band right below him, a gospel choir right behind him. Flags were everywhere.

It was a signature snapshot of rock, race and tradition intermingled, just one piece of Americana on Sunday as some of the biggest names in show business commanded the marbled sweep of the Lincoln Memorial in front of a vast sea of people—and four dancing Obamas.

U2, Beyonce, James Taylor, Garth Brooks and Usher were among the A-list performers who served as opening acts for a president-elect ascending to the White House in two days.

Several hundred thousand people flanked the reflecting pool, filling the Mall past the World War II Memorial and back to the Washington Monument. They transformed a historical staging ground of protest into a roaring celebration.

They cheered for Obama's arrival. They cheered for each high-energy act and for the two magnificent bald eagles that stretched and flapped their wings on cue from their handlers on the stage.

They cheered for Obama when he asserted, "The dream of our founders will live on in our time."

U.S. Park Police Chief Sal Lauro said the crowd appeared to be similar in size to the one that rang in the millennium on New Year's Eve nine years ago. An estimated 300,000 people attended that event.

All the checkpoints surrounding the area were closed before the show began because of concerns about crowding, Lauro said. He said crowd was well-behaved.

There was no red carpet, but the event had the feel of a Hollywood awards ceremony, with stars taking the stage to praise, serenade and even impersonate the next president. Their music was loud, their faces enlarged on jumbo TV screens for the masses in the distance, all under a gray sky.

"I want to be in that picture of history," said Caryn Lustig, 27, of Arlington, Va., explaining why she came four hours early. "I want to say I was that little speck behind the tree."

She wore a "Yes We Did" button.

Obama, his wife, Michelle, and their girls sat with Vice President-elect Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, behind bulletproof glass near the stage erected on the steps of the memorial. Helicopters overhead cut through the thick air. Military Humvees blocked street corners.

Imposing columns of portable potties lined the National Mall at the service of the multitudes.

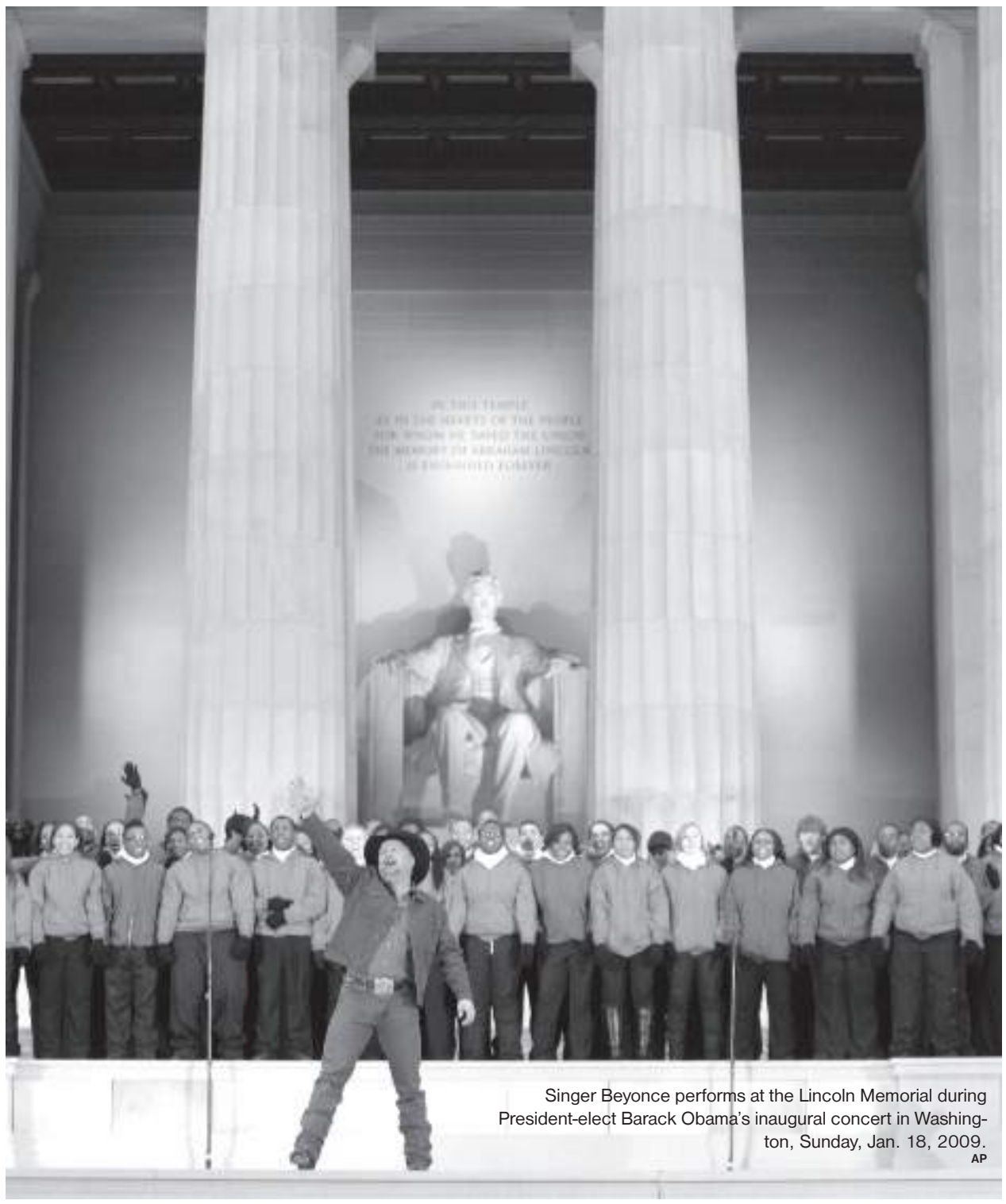
The "We Are One" celebration began with Springsteen, dressed in black, singing "The Rising," with the help of the red-gowned choir. He took a song best known as a call to action following the 2001 terrorist attacks and used it to usher in a new era in politics.

Denzel Washington was the first celebrity to speak, telling the crowd, "We come here knowing that we are all in this together."

Tom Hanks, who as Forrest Gump famously gave a speech at the monument steps and jumped into the reflecting pool, this time appeared in a dark suit and read a somber tribute to Lincoln.

Jamie Foxx brought many in the crowd—and the Obamas—to their feet by repeatedly urging those from Chicago to make some noise: "Chi-town, stand up!" he demanded.

Foxx then launched into a quick impersonation of the president-elect.



Singer Beyonce performs at the Lincoln Memorial during President-elect Barack Obama's inaugural concert in Washington, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2009.
AP

The Obamas rose and danced when Stevie Wonder, Usher and Shakira pumped out Wonder's classic "Higher Ground." Brooks' thumping rendition of "Shout!" was supported by a massive choir wearing red and blue jackets against the cold.

"America, we are one," Beyonce told the crowd after singing a closing rendition of "America, the Beautiful."

The words of other presidents were invoked from the stage—from Ronald Reagan back. John Kennedy's call to national service and Franklin Roosevelt's appeal to face down fear were played to the throngs.

The concert came on the eve of the day that honors Martin Luther King Jr., which itself precedes the inauguration by one day.

Obama's imminent historic achievement in becoming the first black president was celebrated on the same steps where King famously imagined a "table of brotherhood" of white and black. In that "I Have a Dream" speech of 1963, he never quite imagined this. ***(AP)***

AP

Standing behind bulletproof glass, President-elect Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama, right, applaud with Vice President Joe Biden and his wife Jill Biden, left, during "We Are One: Opening Inaugural Celebration at the Lincoln Memorial" in Washington, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2009. At right is his wife Michelle Obama.

Obamas, Bidens enjoy Lincoln Memorial concert

WASHINGTON (AP)—Under the gaze of Abraham Lincoln's statue, Bruce Springsteen and a red-robed gospel choir kicked off a spirited pre-inaugural concert Sunday before tens of thousands on the National Mall.

The crowd erupted in cheers when Obama and his wife, Michelle, arrived, walking down the steps of the memorial, and kept applauding for the high-energy Springsteen act and the performances that followed.

There was no red carpet, but the event had the feel of a Hollywood awards ceremony, with stars taking the stage to praise, serenade, and even impersonate the next president.

Performers including Bono, Beyonce and James Taylor were on the bill.

A crowd expected to reach up to a half-million was stretched past the reflecting pool separating the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument.

Obama and his wife and Vice President-elect Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, sat behind bullet-proof glass near the stage erected on the steps of the memorial.

The concert began with Springsteen, dressed in black, singing "The Rising," with the help of the choir, taking a song best known as a call to action following the 2001 terror attacks and using it to usher in a new era in American politics.

Denzel Washington was the first celebrity to speak, telling the crowd, "we are all in this together."

Another speaker was actor Tom Hanks, who as Forrest Gump famously gave a speech at the monument steps and jumped into the reflecting pool. This time, he appeared in a dark suit and read a somber tribute to Abraham Lincoln.

Jamie Foxx brought many in the crowd—and the Obamas—to their feet by repeatedly urging those from Chicago to make some noise: "Chi-town, stand up!" he demanded.

Foxx then launched into a quick impersonation of the president-elect.

Joe Biden told the crowd: "Look around you. Look at the grace and grandeur that surrounds us and you'll see the work of American hands."

The crowd threw their hands up for Garth Brooks' thumping rendition of "Shout!" supported by a massive choir wearing red and blue jackets against the cold.

The crowd, including Obama and Biden, were writhing when Stevie Wonder, Usher, and Shakira pumped out Wonder's classic "Higher Ground."

Sheryl Crow and will.i.am performed "One Love," and golf great Tiger Woods, the son of a military man, urged the audience to remember the sacrifices of military families.

The event began with a convocation by the Right Rev. Gene Robinson, who asked the crowd to pray for "understanding that our president is a human being and not a messiah."

Rushdie reflects on 20-year-old fatwa

NEW YORK (AP)—Nearly 20 years after being driven underground by a religious decree, he is now Sir Salman Rushdie, properly famous and free, yet still burdened by his status as a symbol of persecution.

"This is the albatross around my neck," the novelist said Sunday night during a conversation with author-activist Irshad Manji at the 92nd Street Y on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

The 61-year-old Rushdie said he would rather be known as an artist than as a social critic, and worried that the attacks against his religious satire, "The Satanic Verses," had obscured "the real person that I am and the actual value of the books."

But the author did seem to enjoy himself as he took on Islamic fundamentalists, President George W. Bush and other objects of his liberal disdain. He was mostly relaxed and jovial despite his reluctance to revisit the death sentence by Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Rushdie

"The Satanic Verses" was released in late 1988 to critical acclaim and furious protest, with Muslims burning copies in the street and demonstrating around the world. On Feb. 14, 1989, the Ayatollah Khomeini issued a religious decree, or fatwa, calling for the author to be killed.

Rushdie, a native of India who had moved to London, was forced into hiding and lived for years under British protection. The 500-page "Satanic Verses" became an international best-seller, although widely regarded as having far more buyers than readers.

The Ayatollah is long dead and Rushdie has stopped worrying about his safety, although the fatwa has never been withdrawn. On Sunday night, he questioned the accuracy of the Quran, used profanity when referring to Islamic leaders and bragged about once wearing a T-shirt that read, "Blasphemy is a Victimless Crime."

But he believes that "a culture of offendedness," in which any religious criticism is regarded as insensitive or even blasphemous, has intimidated others. Last year, Rushdie strongly criticized his own publisher, Random House, Inc., for pulling Sherry Jones' "The Jewel of Medina" over fears that the novel would set off violence. ("The Jewel of Medina," about one of the Prophet Muhammad's wives, was released by Beaufort Books without major incident).

Calling himself an early victim of attempted censorship, Rushdie likened his place in history to a scene from Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, "The Birds." He recalled a scene in which Tippi Hedren spotted a crow outside her window. Hedren paid little attention until she noticed hundreds more had arrived.

"I think I was the first crow," Rushdie said.

The author, otherwise known for his classic "Midnight's Children," said he always considered the reaction to "Satanic Verses" a political, not a religious problem. He noted that Iran's government had recently ended a long war with Iraq and was highly unpopular, and so used Rushdie to regain approval.

Inaugural party on TV: serious with bit of goofy

By DAVID BAUDER
AP TELEVISION WRITER

The inaugural concert telecast Sunday on HBO from the Lincoln Memorial had a sense of history and seriousness of purpose—sprinkled with a little frat party.

The latter came when Garth Brooks, backed by a youthful chorus, sang the rock staple "Shout." Thousands of spectators raised their hands in the time-honored dance.

What was "Shout" doing there? What, for that matter, was Garth Brooks? The crowd didn't seem to care, perhaps grateful for a little goofiness and a chance to move in the chilly weather.

HBO paid a production company $2.5 million for the rights to show the event, which it made available for free to all cable and satellite customers. It was a near-flawless production with multiple camera angles and a majestic backdrop in the giant statue of Abraham Lincoln.

Through the cast, song selections and readings, the "We Are One" theme was driven home almost to the point of cliche. But it may have felt most real in what seemed like an offhand comment by comic George Lopez.

"I've got one question," he said. "Anyone here from out of town? Well, you're at home now."

Actors from Steve Carell to Forrest Whitaker gave readings that served to tie President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration to American history. Remarks by presidents Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan were used. The speakers recalled Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech at the same Lincoln Memorial, and Marian Anderson singing there after being barred from Constitution Hall.

The best were Denzel Washington, given the job of first outlining the themes, and Tom Hanks. Hanks quoted from Lincoln's speeches as a band played Aaron Copeland's "A Lincoln Portrait."

The musicians did the real inspiring. Bruce Springsteen, backed by dozens of chorale singers, performed "The Rising," the title cut of his album that helped the healing process after the 2001 terrorist attacks.

Stevie Wonder joined Usher and Shakira for a hip-shakin' version of Wonder's "Higher Ground." Another strong collaboration was Herbie Hancock, Sheryl Crow and will.i.am doing Bob Marley's "One Love," with will.i.am doing an impromptu rap on racial harmony. James Taylor, John Legend and Jennifer Nettles did a reassuring "Shower the People," although our favorite of that song may have been Taylor's unbilled male backing singer.

And is there any doubt that Beyonce is now the queen of all she surveys? Not only did she get a finale singing "America the Beautiful" on Sunday, she will serenade Obama and his wife Michelle at their first inaugural ball on Tuesday night.

Mary J. Blige did an energetic "Lean on Me" that got the Obamas smiling, although her voice didn't quite have their range for it. Having Josh Groban sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" coming out of a clip of Anderson's Lincoln Memorial version was unfair to both of them. U2 didn't soar quite like you'd expect and Bono did a little too much politicking, trying to draw the Gaza conflict into the day.

At least he knew how to use a microphone. Couldn't someone have told Joe Biden that he didn't have to shout as if he didn't have one?

Kids being kids, Sasha and Malia Obama were polite but didn't have the enthusiasm they will no doubt show when the Jonas Brothers perform for them Monday. Producers were also cursed by a little girl who sat behind the president-elect and several times could be seen in a sound sleep when the camera cut to him.

Her snooze was no reflection on a show that set a strong standard for three days of inaugural events on TV.

Obama illustration finds place at Portrait Gallery

WASHINGTON (AP)—You might remember a red, white and blue illustration of Barack Obama, staring off into space with the word "Hope" underneath his face.

Copies of that image showed up on posters, coffee mugs, T-shirts, even hats during the presidential campaign.

Now people visiting Washington can see the image, up close and in person, at the National Portrait Gallery.

The work by artist Shepard Fairey can be seen in the gallery's new arrivals section. The Los Angeles artist presented the illustration to the gallery on Saturday, three days before Obama's inauguration.

On a stage facing supporters, Fairey helped lift the veil off a mixed-media stenciled collage version that he created around May last year. Afterward, he greeted fans who immediately gathered around the artist and his six-foot-high piece.

The museum announced earlier this month that the portrait would be a part of the permanent collection at the National Portrait Gallery. Art collectors Heather and Tony Podesta of Washington donated money for the Smithsonian to purchase the work.

"We look for an image that has significance or resonance for a particular moment in that individual's career," said Carolyn Carr, deputy director for the Portrait Gallery. "It's the image that became iconic for this campaign, became ubiquitous in terms of its distribution throughout the nation."

Typically, the gallery acquires official portraits of presidents as they are leaving office, and an official Obama portrait will be added later.

AP
"Barack Obama," a mixed media collage by Shepard Fairey, is installed in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2009.

When the Los Angeles artist created the initial illustration of Barack Obama in mid-January last year, he only wanted to make a patriotic image of a politician he actually liked. Did he think that it could become one of the most memorable images from the 2008 election?

"Absolutely not," Fairey said. "My desire for the image was to make something that I thought was patriotic and iconic but unique enough to capture the interest of people."

He released the image on his Web site shortly after he created it and made thousands of posters for the street. As its visibility caught on, supporters began downloading the image and distributing it at campaign events, while blogs and other Internet sites picked it up.

"It was both the visible presence of the posters and the Internet combined that yielded an immediate viral storm," he said.

At first, Obama's team just gave him permission to make the image, he said. But soon after he created it, a worker involved in the campaign asked if Fairey could make an image from a photo the campaign had rights to, he said. Fairey changed the portrait's bottom phrase to "change" for a revised illustration.

Fast forward several months. Shepard's inspiration was preparing to be sworn into office at the White House, and the image that helped pushed along Obama's visibility in the election is now hangs beside the national treasures at the National Portrait Gallery.

Fairey said he's kept touch with some members of Obama's team and would like to work for Obama again, maybe as a consultant for art education policy.

He has to reach him first. "He's a lot harder to get a hold of now," he said.

Rice to meet with publishers about memoirs

NEW YORK (AP)—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will be meeting with publishers later this month to discuss three book projects, including a memoir of her service in the Bush administration.

Rice on Friday confirmed to The Associated Press in Washington that she is pursuing book proposals in the near future.

Executives at two publishing houses and a senior aide to Rice say potential deals would also include a memoir about Rice's family and a multimedia project about international affairs for preteens and adolescents. All asked not to be identified, saying that talks were still in preliminary stages.

Although the 54-year-old Rice has been criticized for her loyalty to an unpopular president, publishers believe there is strong interest in her story—a minister's daughter who rose from a segregated community in Birmingham, Ala., to become a trusted national security official for the first President Bush and a close ally of the second President Bush as national security adviser and secretary of state.

Rice

The senior aide to Rice said that she will visit with publishers in New York on Jan. 28-29, and is being represented by the William Morris Agency. Several other administration officials working on memoirs, including first lady Laura Bush and political adviser Karl Rove, had retained Washington attorney Robert Barnett, who has also negotiated deals for then-Sen. Barack Obama and former President Bill Clinton.

‘Paul Blart: Mall Cop’ nabs top box office spot

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kevin James bumbles and stumbles to take down the bad guys, but his “Paul Blart: Mall Cop” had no trouble nabbing the top spot at the box office this weekend.

The PG-rated comedy, starring James as a portly shopping center security guard who tries to foil a bank heist, made $33.8 million in its first three days and is expected to reach $40 million over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend.

That far surpasses expectations, said Rory Bruer, president of worldwide distribution for Sony, which released the movie.

“We had a lot of screenings as well as tracking that was good on it. We were hopeful we could do in the range of $25 million for four days and that would have been a terrific result for us. But now it looks like we’re going to do $40 million for four days, and that is just, like, a ‘wow’ number,” Bruer said Sunday. “It totally speaks to just how much audiences love Kevin James, No. 1, and how hard he worked to promote this film.”

1. “**Paul Blart: Mall Cop**,” $33.8 million.
2. “**Gran Torino**,” $22.2 million.
3. “**My Bloody Valentine 3-D**,” $21.9 million.
4. “**Notorious**,” $21.5 million.
5. “**Hotel for Dogs**,” $17.7 million.
6. “**Bride Wars**,” $11.75 million.
7. “**The Unborn**,” $9.8 million.
8. “**Defiance**,” $9.2 million.
9. “**Marley & Me**,” $6.3 million.
10. “**Slumdog Millionaire**,” $5.9 million.

After proving his value as a sidekick to Will Smith in “Hitch” and Adam Sandler in “I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry,” James shows here he can also be a reliable leading man, said Paul Dergarabedian, president of the box-office tracker Media by Numbers.

“In these tough, recession-laden times, you’d think people wouldn’t want a movie that’s based around a mall, but they totally do,” Dergarabedian said. “Kevin James has that everyman quality. People relate to him.”

Last week’s No. 1 movie, “Gran Torino,” dropped to second place but only by 25 percent. The Warner Bros. drama, directed by and starring Clint Eastwood as a bigot who becomes a reluctant neighborhood hero, made $22.2 million this weekend for a cumulative gross of $73.2 million.

Among other new releases, the Lionsgate horror flick “My Bloody Valentine 3-D” opened at the No. 3 spot with $21.9 million.

Fourth was “Notorious,” about slain rapper Notorious B.I.G., which made $21.5 million. That’s the biggest opening ever for Fox Searchlight, which previously released such critical darlings and crowd-pleasers as “Juno” and “Little Miss Sunshine.”

“It’s a very high quality film, and it’s a compelling look at a compelling cultural icon who, like many cultural icons, left way too early but left an indelible mark on society,” said Chris Aronson, senior vice president of domestic distribution for 20th Century Fox.

The week’s other new wide release, the Paramount family comedy “Hotel for Dogs,” opened at No. 5 with $17.7 million. Over at Paramount Vantage, “Defiance,” based on the true story of Jews who survived the Holocaust by forming a community in the forests of Belarus, did well in its nationwide expansion. The movie starring Daniel Craig and Liev Schreiber made $9.8 million to reach the No. 8 spot.

The big winner at last weekend’s Golden Globes, “Slumdog Millionaire,” crept into the No. 10 spot with $5.9 million. The Fox Searchlight drama about a teen who rises from the slums of Mumbai to become a game show champion won awards for best picture, director (Danny Boyle), screenplay and original score.

Now playing in limited release in 582 theaters, “Slumdog” will expand to more than 1,200 theaters next weekend following Thursday’s Academy Award nominations. It’s made a total of $42.7 million in 10 weeks.

“You can see the impact of the Golden Globe winnings and, also, people are just discovering this film so we’re able to keep growing our audience,” said Richard Shamban, vice president of theatrical distribution for Fox Searchlight.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Tuesday.

AP

In this image released by Sony Pictures, Kevin James is shown in the comedy, “Paul Blart: Mall Cop.”

Rival studios reach deal on ‘Watchmen’ release

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The superhero film “Watchmen” will be watched by audiences after all—and on time.

Warner Bros. and 20th Century Fox settled their nearly yearlong dispute over the movie on Thursday, the studios announced in a joint statement.

The movie will open in theaters as planned on March 6, the statement said. The exact terms of the agreement were not disclosed and will remain confidential.

The release date had been in doubt for months as each studio’s attorneys grappled for an upper hand. Fox contended that Warner Bros. shot the film knowing that it didn’t have all the adequate rights; Warner Bros. countered that Fox had lost its rights in the graphic novel and was owed nothing more than a right of first refusal.

At stake was a movie that has stoked the excitement of “Watchmen” fans and that Warner Bros. claims cost it $150 million to film and market.

Until recently, the studios appeared to be in a stalemate as protracted as the Cold War backdrop of the film’s source material. But a Christmas Eve ruling by U.S. District Judge Gary Allen Feess found that Fox did have at least a distribution stake in the film.

Within days of that ruling, Warner Bros. and Fox were in serious settlement negotiations.

Attorneys were scheduled to update Feess on the settlement Friday morning.

While the studios agreed on little throughout the case, the statement released Thursday sought to end months of acrimony.

“Warner Bros. and Fox, like all ‘Watchmen’ fans, look forward with great anticipation to this film’s March 6 release in theaters,” the statement said.

Fox is owned by News Corp.; Warner Bros. is a unit of Time Warner Inc.

As part of the agreement, both sides acknowledged the others were acting in “good faith,” although Warner Bros. conceded Fox notified it of its rights before filming began.

Fox acquired movie rights to “Watchmen,” a graphic novel by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, in the 1980s.

The project has had a tortured course to the big screen, with Warner Bros. having to resolve issues with other studios that had considered making the film.

The various agreements led Feess to declare during one hearing that the case was “very complex, convoluted.”

The same could be said for “Watchmen,” which features a complex story line set in an alternate-history United States and characters with names such as Rorschach and Ozymandias.

“Watchmen” has generated considerable buzz, in part because of the threat that the film’s release would be delayed or blocked. But the attention is also because its director, Zack Snyder, helped turn another graphic novel, “300,” into a blockbuster.

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Hotel For Dogs
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:35
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:35
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon and Tues 4:00 7:00
Emma Roberts, Don Cheadle
Comedy, Children • Rated PG
Synopsis
Andi and her younger brother, Bruce, live in a strictly no-pets household and are fast running out of ways to keep their perpetually hungry dog, Friday, under wraps. When they accidentally stumble on an abandoned hotel that is already home to a couple of resourceful strays, Andi has an idea. She taps Bruce’s mechanical genius for turning everyday objects into mechanical marvels, and, with the help of their friends in the neighborhood, transform the down-and-out hotel into a magical dog paradise--not only for Friday, but for every stray they can find.

My Bloody Valentine
Friday 4:30 7:15 9:55
Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15
Mon and Tues 4:30 7:15
Jaime King, Tom Atkins
Horror • Rated R
Synopsis
Ten years ago, a tragedy changed the town of Harmony forever. Tom Hanniger, an inexperienced coal miner, caused an accident in the tunnels that trapped and killed five men and sent the only survivor, Harry Warden, into a permanent coma. Then, exactly one year later, on Valentine's Day, Harry Warden woke up--and brutally murdered twenty-two people with a pickaxe before being killed. Ten years later, Tom Hanniger returns to Harmony on Valentine's Day, still haunted by the deaths he caused.

Paul Blart, Mall Cop
Friday 4:20 7:05 10:00
Saturday 1:05 4:20 7:05 10:00
Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:05
Mon and Tues 4:20 7:05
Kevin James, Jayma Mays
Comedy • Rated PG
Synopsis
A single, suburban dad tries to make ends meet as a security officer at a New Jersey mall. It’s a job he takes very seriously, though no one else does. When Santa's helpers at the mall stage a coup, shutting down the megaplex and taking hostages (Paul’s daughter and sweetheart among them), Jersey’s most formidable mall cop will have to become a real cop to save the day.

Bride Wars
Friday 4:15 7:30 9:30
Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:30
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30
Mon and Tues 4:15 7:30
Kate Hudson, Anne Hathaway
Romantic Comedy • Rated PG

Unborn
Friday 4:25 7:20 9:50
Saturday 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50
Sunday 1:30 4:25 7:20
Mon and Tues 4:25 7:20
Gary Oldman, Odette Yustman
Thriller, Supernatural • Rated PG 13

Gran Torino
Friday 4:10 7:10 9:40
Saturday 1:15 4:10 7:10 9:40
Sunday 1:15 4:10 7:10
Mon and Tues 4:10 7:10
Clint Eastwood, Bee Vang
Action, Drama, Thriller • Rated PG R

Bedtime Stories
Friday 4:05 7:25 9:45
Saturday 1:20 4:05 7:25 9:45
Sunday 1:20 4:05 7:25
Mon and Tues 4:05 7:25
Adam Sandler, Keri Russell
Comedy, Adventure • Rated PG

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Stars shine-briefly-at Sundance party

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—Ah, the glamour of the Sundance Film Festival party circuit: Long lines in the cold, throngs of people trying to sneak in and the ever-so brief appearances of celebrities who show up to get their pictures taken and then exit out a back door.

For 10 days, this mountain town makes Utah look a little more like "The Hills" and a lot less like "Big Love" with its carnival-like atmosphere of celebrities, paparazzi and a seemingly never-ending string of parties along the city's historic Main Street.

The scene was no different late Saturday at the Kenneth Cole Black party, where Nick Cannon served as a guest DJ for a party intended to honor independent filmmaking. Clips showing stars like Kevin Bacon, Alan Cumming and Jeff Corrigan played on about half a dozen flat screen TVs throughout the room as partygoers munched on popcorn in miniature tubs and drank beer bearing pink stamps that verifies it was bought at a state liquor store and is full strength—unlike most beer served in Utah.

Held on the bottom floor of the luxurious Sky Lodge on Main Street, the intimate venue quickly became packed with movie executives, festival volunteers and celebrities who struggled to make it to the bar to get a drink and risked knocking over people next to them if they danced. The room's stated capacity of 114 people was easily broken by 11:30 p.m.

Denise Richards, who spent the earlier part of the day learning to snowboard, spent no more than 15 minutes at the party mingling with a few friends as a camera crew filming a reality television show followed her around.

While Richards drew plenty of attention, Matthew Lillard was able to largely go unnoticed, even calling out a camera crew for interviewing him without knowing his name or what movies he's appeared in. Lillard is best known for appearing in "Scream" and "Scooby Doo," although he said he's looking forward to getting away from being known as the character Shaggy.

Many of the celebrities who were there, including Bacon, spent their few minutes at the venue talking to each other just off the red carpet and outside the main entrance to the bash because it was one of the few areas with space.

The packed house didn't seem to dampen the spirits of Virginia Madsen, who was continually smiling and worked the crowded room with ease as hits from the 80s played.

In town since Wednesday to serve on the Sundance jury, Madsen said she's been having a blast watching movies.

Transgender model steals the show in Fashion Rio

AP

Transgender model Patricia Oliveira wears a creation by Complexo B during the Fashion Rio Show in Rio de Janeiro, Friday, Jan. 16, 2009.

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Rio closed its main fashion event of the year with less attention to the clothes than the model—a transgendered actress.

Patricia Araujo received a standing ovation after parading along the runway for the Complexo B brand late Friday to end the weeklong event in a city that delights in shocking the prudish with each year's Carnival celebration.

Complexo B designer Beto Neves said he invited Araujo to amaze the public.

"In fashion, the cool thing is to surprise," he told O Dia newspaper.

Globo Television's Web site called the 25-year-old Araujo "the star" of the show's final day, and model Isabeli Fontana told O Dia that Araujo "is the greatest."

Tall and slim, the dark-haired Araujo entered the catwalk wearing a long fur coat and quickly unveiled a short black-and-white dress to the applause of the hundreds of guests at the event.

"I love to be mobbed by the press," she told O Dia afterward. "I've always dreamed of being famous."

Her legal name is Patricia Oliveira, but she is known by the stage name of Araujo.

Philadelphia museum receives 'Big' musical gift

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—A Philadelphia museum has received a musical gift for children and "Big" kids alike.

The 16-foot walk-on piano Tom Hanks played in his 1988 film "Big" will be on display next month at the city's Please Touch Museum.

The instrument is a gift to the children's museum from a couple in suburban Merion who bought it after the movie's release.

In the movie, Hanks and actor Robert Loggia jump on the giant piano and walk out a duet of tunes that included "Chopsticks."

It was built in Philadelphia by Remo Saraceni who called his invention a Walking Piano.

Prosecution: Polanski has no right to hearing

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Fugitive director Roman Polanski has no right to a hearing on a motion to dismiss his 31-year-old sex case because he refuses to appear in court, a prosecutor asserted Friday.

Prosecutor David Walgren said in newly filed documents that Polanski flouted the law when he fled to France to avoid sentencing for the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl.

He said the director has no right to a hearing until he submits to the court's jurisdiction. He added that the now-45-year-old victim, who wants to speak at the hearing Wednesday to urge dismissal, should not be heard unless he appears.

Polanski

Polanski's lawyer says he has no plans to ever return to the United States but claims the case can be heard without him. If Polanski chose to attend the hearing, he would be immediately arrested.

Walgren said little has changed legally since the day in 1978 when Polanski failed to appear in a Santa Monica courtroom for sentencing.

"The defendant ignored a lawful and valid court order to appear in court and instead chose to flee to the comforts of France," he said.

"It would be a farce for this court to review the case when it has no jurisdiction over the defendant," the prosecutor said.

Walgren argued that allowing such a hearing would violate the basic principle of the fugitive disentitlement doctrine, that "a fugitive from justice has no right to ask the court to review the very judgment that the fugitive flouts."

'Plow' producers file grievance against Piven

NEW YORK (AP)—The producers of "Speed-the-Plow" have filed a grievance with Actors' Equity Association, the stage actors' union, against Jeremy Piven for abruptly leaving the Broadway revival last month.

Pavin

News of the filing was announced Friday by lead producer Jeffrey Richards, who declined further comment.

The actor quit the David Mamet comedy less than two months after it opened to favorable reviews at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. Piven's doctor said the 43-year-old actor was unable perform because of high levels of mercury in his system, possibly caused by eating large amounts of raw fish.

Piven's publicist, Samantha Mast, called the producers' claims "absurd and outrageous." "He withdrew from the play due to medical necessity on the advice of his doctors, after he was hospitalized and warned by his physicians that enforced rest was necessary in order to avoid serious medical problems, including a heart attack," Mast said in a statement Friday.

Bride's father does slow boil over meatless wedding feast

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: My daughter and future son-in-law are being married this summer. They are both vegans, and are planning a vegan dinner for their reception. I thought it was a very cool way of showing what different types of vegan dishes could be planned, but I'm getting grief from my husband. He thinks it is "selfish" of them not to offer a meat dish. I couldn't disagree more.

I told him I think they are right, but that I'd write to you and ask your opinion. It will have no effect on their reception, but I'd like to quiet things down on the home front.

FUTURE MOTHER-IN-LAW

DEAR FUTURE M-I-L: This will be your daughter's day, not your husband's. I'm sure the food they offer will be not only delicious, but also sufficient to satisfy the guests, who may not even realize they aren't being offered meat.

If your husband is concerned about what will be served, he should eat before going to the wedding. Please tell him I said so, and let him chew on that.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am 15 and really like three boys. I enjoy being with each of them because they are all great guys. The problem is, each one believes that I like just him and has no idea about the others. I don't want to break any of their hearts because they have all told me they like me.

I also don't want to be thought of as a player or anyone saying I'm using them because I really do have feelings for each of them. Any advice?

LOVES BOYS IN UTAH

DEAR LOVES BOYS: Where did each of those boys get the impression that you liked "only him"? My advice is to set the record straight now, before you DO get a reputation. Just say, "I think you're great, but I'm not ready for an exclusive relationship with anyone right now." It may not be music to their ears, but it's honest.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I will graduate from college in June, and I plan to move back in with my parents. I have a steady job and can afford an apartment if I want, but I'd rather live with my parents because we have always had a close relationship. When I told a few friends my plans, they laughed at me.

Abby, I love my parents and have no problem living with them instead of living alone. What do I say to the "friends" who think I'm silly and stupid?

DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL IN WISCONSIN

DEAR DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL: Had you signed your letter with any other name than the one you did, I'd have advised you to tell your friends to mind their own business.

However, because this is the way you identified yourself, allow me to comment. Have you discussed your plans with your parents, and will they welcome you living with them indefinitely? Because you are an adult and self-supporting, will you be contributing financially to the household? Will you have a curfew?

An important part of growing up is leaving the nest and flying solo for a while. My concern is that by living at home and clinging to the role of "Daddy's Little Girl," you won't be able to fully mature as an individual.

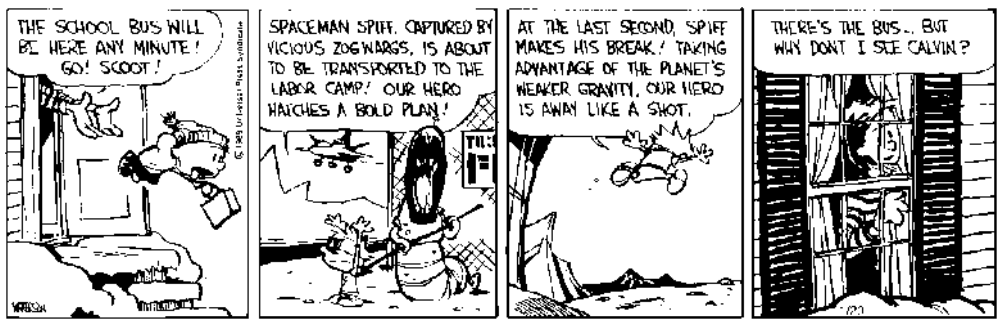
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

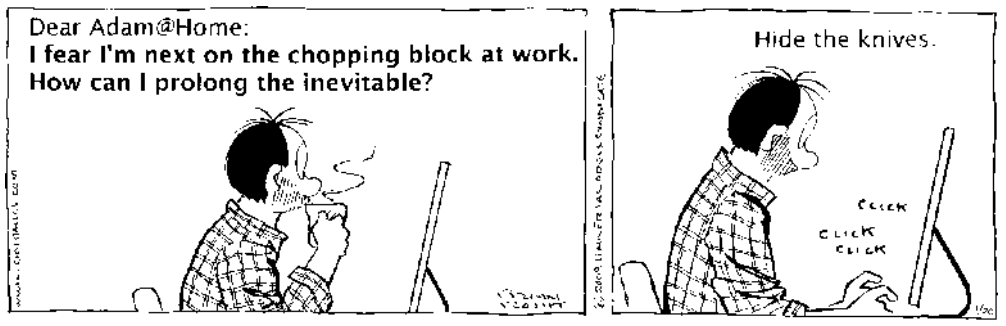

THE SCHOOL BUS WILL BE HERE ANY MINUTE! GO! SCOOT!
SPACEMAN SPIFF, CAPTURED BY VICIOUS ZOGWARGS, IS ABOUT TO BE TRANSPORTED TO THE LABOR CAMP! OUR HERO HATCHES A BOLD PLAN!
AT THE LAST SECOND, SPIFF MAKES HIS BREAK! TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE PLANET'S WEAKER GRAVITY, OUR HERO IS AWAY LIKE A SHOT.
THERE'S THE BUS.. BUT WHY DON'T I SEE CALVIN?

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

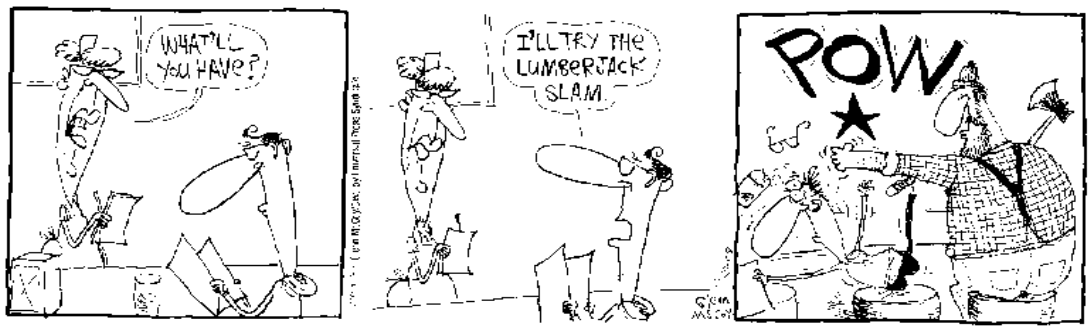
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

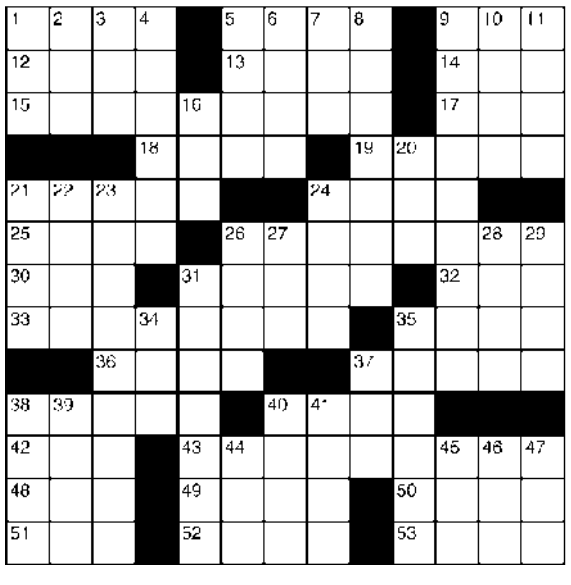
ACROSS
1 Pleased
5 Low voice
9 Comedy's DeLuise
12 Highly rated
13 Friend
14 Raw rock
15 Dangerous fish
17 Oscar Wilde's sine qua non
18 Charged bits
19 Valentino's dance
21 Chocolate source
24 Beatles movie
25 Money of Iran
26 Squashed with the feet
30 Egos' counterparts
31 Adolescents
32 Exist
33 Maryland city
35 Talking bird
36 Family member
37 "Star Wars" weapon
38 Sounded like a crow
40 Scratched (out)
42 Literary collection
43 1987 Woody Allen film
48 Eddie of vaudeville
49 Wading bird
50 Duel tool
51 Type measures
52 Reply to "Shall we?"
53 Whatever remains

DOWN
1 Petrol
2 Parcel of land
3 Blackbird
4 No
5 Hoedown venue
6 "Sad to tell, ..."
7 Crafty
8 Methods
9 Makes seem less important
10 First (Abbr.)
11 "Take — your leader"
16 Sticky stuff
20 Matterhorn, for one
21 Home, in today's jargon
22 Staffer
23 Gilligan and his companions
24 Mandlikova of tennis
26 Criterion
27 Roulette bet
28 Sea eagle
29 Letter opener
31 Ivy attachment
34 Coloration
35 More irate
37 Zodiac feline
38 Eatery
39 Any time now
40 Redact
41 Part of SWAK
44 Honest politician?
45 Mimic
46 "Of course"
47 Prepared

Solution time: 21 mins.

A	F	A	R	■	D	O	C	■	H	E	F	T
S	A	R	A	S	O	■	A	■	F	M	I	R
H	O	T	S	H	O	■	S	■	V	I	S	E
■	■	■	C	A	R	■	S	W	A	I	H	L
A	B	R	A	M	■	B	F	A	M	■	■	■
I	A	I	L	■	H	O	I	S	F	U	R	■
F	T	C	■	R	F	R	T	H	■	F	E	F
■	H	O	I	L	I	N	E	■	W	O	N	K
■	■	■	S	U	E	■	H	A	S	T	E	■
M	O	S	H	E	S	■	S	I	R	■	■	■
A	N	T	I	■	H	O	T	S	P	O	T	S
S	C	A	R	■	I	N	A	S	E	N	S	E
K	E	N	T	■	P	E	R	■	D	O	P	E

Yesterday's answer 1-20



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Rob Bourdon, 30; Gary Barlow, 38; Stacey Dash, 43; Bill Maher, 53

Happy Birthday: Don't overreact, overdo or drown your sorrows when what you should be doing is assessing your situation and making the necessary reforms, improvements or direction changes to suit your needs. You are the one responsible for the outcome of your life—no one else can do things for you. Question your actions and do what needs to be done to make your life better. Your numbers are 3, 5, 17, 20, 25, 36, 41

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Be a hero and do for others. The opportunity to learn something about yourself and the people you hang out with will help you make an important decision that will influence your future. Don't get wrapped up in the moment if someone is trying to talk you into a risky financial deal. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You'll be far too emotional to deal with professional matters rationally. Step back and view what everyone else is doing before you make a decision that may be difficult to reverse. Don't take unnecessary chances. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't expect the ones you love to be as accommodating as your friends and colleagues. Added responsibilities may make your day a little more difficult but it will be a learning experience that will help you out in the future. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): A deal, settlement or legal matter can be wrapped up. Expect a tempting offer from someone you love and respect. Added responsibilities are present but will bring great joy and pride. A change at home will add to your security. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Look on the bright side. Once you have positive thought flowing freely, you can manipulate whatever situation you face with friends or colleagues. You will come up with a brilliant idea that will be well received. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): It's best to keep a stiff upper lip and ride out any storm you face. Stick close to the people who think the same way you do but don't argue with the ones who do not. Listen, assess and organize. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You cannot go wrong if you organize or plan something that will enhance your chance of getting ahead. Share a creative idea with people you know will be interested. A short trip will lead to information and suggestions. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): This isn't the time to overreact or jump to conclusions. Put things in perspective and realize your losses and gains. Nothing is a waste of time and every lesson learned will contribute to your future success. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You have to push to do the things you enjoy if you want to be successful. Don't let anyone who is uncomplimentary discourage you from following through with your plans. Be true to your dreams. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Open up and be receptive to a cause. You may be surprised by the connections you make. A deal that required some changes in order to move forward can be closed if you are willing to compromise. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't take anyone or anything too seriously, especially if emotions are high and tempers are hot. Be willing to bend a little to get along. A partnership can turn out to be much better if you get to know one another. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): A broader look at your situation and how it's affecting others will give you a better idea of what will help and what won't. You cannot assume anything when it comes to how people will react. Secret information may leak. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are open, interesting and intelligent. You are forward thinking, progressive and often ahead of your time. You are sensitive and emotional.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8				7				9
4			8		9			5
		2				8		
	5		7		1		9	
6								7
	4		9		3		1	
		1				2		
9			4		6			8
7				5				1

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/20

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	7	2	9	6	8	4	3	1
8	3	1	4	7	2	5	9	6
4	9	6	5	1	3	2	7	8
2	6	4	7	3	9	8	1	5
3	5	8	1	2	6	9	4	7
9	1	7	8	5	4	3	6	2
1	8	3	2	9	7	6	5	4
6	2	5	3	4	1	7	8	9
7	4	9	6	8	5	1	2	3

Difficulty Level ★ 1/20

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER Solution: 7 letters

E	L	E	T	U	B	I	R	T	S	I	D	E	H	Y
S	T	O	T	Y	R	T	N	A	P	N	E	C	T	D
S	O	A	C	U	G	I	F	T	O	R	R	A	L	I
E	G	C	C	A	B	E	R	I	F	U	N	N	A	S
L	O	R	I	O	L	I	T	C	H	O	U	S	E	B
E	V	I	A	A	V	I	R	C	I	O	P	H	H	U
M	E	S	A	N	L	D	O	T	R	O	P	P	U	S
O	R	I	R	A	T	M	A	A	N	R	R	E	I	E
H	N	S	O	N	M	Z	S	S	O	O	S	O	C	C
U	M	C	E	U	I	S	O	G	V	D	C	P	O	R
N	E	R	N	N	I	R	R	I	O	H	E	L	P	U
G	N	I	A	S	E	A	D	O	N	A	T	E	E	O
R	T	G	T	D	M	E	G	N	I	D	I	A	T	S
Y	R	A	T	E	N	O	M	Y	E	V	I	R	D	E
O	Y	E	N	O	M	V	O	L	U	N	T	E	E	R

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Yesterday's Answer: Letters

Treasury of puzzle books on sale at most bookstores or may be ordered for $4.95 each plus $3.95 postage and handling from $4.00 total, each U.S. Puzzle Treasury, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL Universal Press Syndicate, Inc. Wonderword 1107 Broadway, Kansas City, MO 64105 or call 1-800-642-6480. Check or credit card accepted. Terms of

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Country: **People's Republic of China**
Date of Birth: **April 24, 1967**

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Name: **ZHANG DAXIU**
Passport No.: **G05107425**
Country: **People's Republic of China**
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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Cardinals edge Eagles for NFC title

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)—Down and out for decades, the Arizona Cardinals have turned a bad joke into a Super Bowl-bound team.

Yes, the Cardinals, founding members of the NFL, but historically among the most dysfunctional of franchises, are heading for the championship game in Tampa.

Capitalizing on Larry Fitzgerald's three first-half touchdown receptions, then coolly marching downfield to Kurt Warner's 8-yard scoring pass to rookie Tim Hightower with 2:53 left, they beat the Philadelphia Eagles 32-25 Sunday for the NFC championship.

"I want to say Arizona Cardinals and Super Bowl in the same sentence," a jubilant Warner said. "The Arizona Cardinals in the Super Bowl. How about it?"

Arizona (12-7) will face AFC champion Pittsburgh in two weeks in Tampa for the NFL title. The Steelers beat Baltimore 23-14 later in the day.

"To make it to the Super Bowl and to have a chance, an opportunity to win it, you relish those moments in your career," said safety Adrian Wilson, the longest-tenured Cardinal. "This being my eighth year, and to be in this organization at this time with these players and these coaches, it's a great moment."

A stunning moment that nearly didn't happen. Donovan McNabb was superb in leading Philadelphia's second-half rally from 18 points down to a 25-24 lead, but after Hightower's score, he misfired from midfield four times in the final moments.

If the Cardinals, the first No. 4 seed to host a conference championship game, were supposed to be thunderstruck by their surroundings, they instead responded like playoff veterans.

Sure, they blew that 24-6 halftime lead. But then the 37-year-old Warner, a Super Bowl MVP from almost a decade ago with the St. Louis Rams, engineered a precise, 72-yard drive to win it with his fourth TD pass of the day.

He finished the comeback with the 8-yard pass to Hightower, then hit Ben Patrick for the 2-point conversion.

"The demeanor in the huddle didn't change at all," Fitzgerald said. "The guys were focused and ready to go. You could see the look in guys' eyes. Nobody wanted to be the guy who let this team down. Everybody did their job when we needed them to do it."

But the key was the unstoppable Fitzgerald, who had nine receptions for 152 yards, including two big catches on the decisive drive. The All-Pro set a single postseason record with 419 yards receiving, surpassing the great Jerry Rice. And Fitzgerald has one more game to go—in the Super Bowl.

Can you imagine?

They surely never looked this good before in the Phoenix area, or their previous homes in Chicago and St. Louis.

"I want to say thanks to all of you guys," Warner told the crowd during postgame celebrations that included streams of confetti spewed into the air and the obligatory "We are the Champions" blaring. "When nobody else believed in us, when nobody else believed in me, you guys did and we're going to the Super Bowl."

AP

Arizona Cardinals' Larry Fitzgerald (11) reacts after teammate Tim Hightower caught a touchdown pass during the second half of the NFL NFC championship football game against the Philadelphia Eagles Sunday, Jan. 18, 2009, in Glendale, Ariz.

Blown out by the Eagles 48-20 on Thanksgiving, coach Ken Whisenhunt's team looked completely different in its first title game since 1948.

"And it was appropriate we had a bunch of different people make those plays, and it was a great team win for us," said Whisenhunt, who in two seasons as coach has turned a losing culture into a championship environment.

With playoff victories over Atlanta, Carolina and the Eagles (11-7-1), this is the Cardinals' winningest season. They've already surpassed their total of postseason wins dating back to when the playoffs began in 1933.

The most attention paid to the Cardinals since moving here in 1988 came on a sad note—when star safety Pat Tillman suddenly retired in 2002 to join the Army Rangers, and was later killed in Afghanistan.

"It's been a tough number of years here in Arizona," Whisenhunt admitted.

The last NFC team since the 1970 merger to make it this far, Arizona also is the first team with nine wins in the regular season to make the Super Bowl since the 1979 Rams lost to the Steelers.

For the favored Eagles, it was another disappointing end. Coach Andy Reid's team reached the NFC title game five times in the last eight seasons, losing four. They lost to New England in their only Super Bowl appearance during that run.

"You never want anything to end, and you don't see it ending," McNabb said. "To end this way, it's tough, when you're that close to making the Super Bowl."

This one looked like a romp through the Valley of the Sun for the hosts at halftime. The Eagles knew Fitzgerald was Arizona's most dangerous player, but they couldn't slow him down.

"You've just got to play it play by play and try to shut him down each play," linebacker Akeem Jordan said.

Fat chance.

"He's been on fire," fellow Cardinals wideout Anquan Boldin said, "running wide open, making big plays. He played like a man among boys."

In the second half, though, Philadelphia brought more pressure on Warner. The Cardinals gained only 8 yards in the third quarter, while McNabb hit Brent Celek for touchdowns of 6 and 31 yards.

McNabb, who once this season got benched after a terrible opening half, had come alive with a fury, even silencing the crowd for a while. His 62-yard heave to rookie DeSean Jackson was tipped by cornerback Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie into Jackson's hands near the goal line with 10:45 to go.

Shockingly, Philadelphia was on top 25-24.

Time for Warner to show his pedigree on a drive that took nearly 8 minutes and carried the Cardinals to victory.

For the well-traveled Warner, the win was his third in as many NFC title contests. He led the 1999 and 2001 Rams to the Super Bowl—he was league MVP both years and St. Louis went 1-1 in those Super Bowls—before his career faded.

But the resurrected Warner has been sensational this season, and now he's led the Cardinals far beyond any previous success since moving to Arizona.

He finished 21-for-28 for 279 yards and the four TDs.

McNabb was 27-for-46 for 375 yards.

Steelers top Ravens for AFC title, Super Bowl XLIII next

PITTSBURGH (AP)—The Pittsburgh Steelers outhit the Baltimore Ravens and outplayed them behind a steady-as-he-goes Ben Roethlisberger, marching into the Super Bowl behind a defense that brought back memories of the storied Steel Curtain.

The Steelers ended their home-field jinx in the AFC title game by beating Baltimore 23-14 on Sunday and Troy Polamalu ended any chance the Ravens had for a comeback with a 40-yard interception return for a touchdown.

The Steelers will meet the Arizona Cardinals in the Super Bowl in two weeks in Tampa.

The matchup is intriguing—Mike Tomlin vs. the Cardinals' Ken Whisenhunt, the offensive coordinator when the Steelers won the Super Bowl three seasons ago who went to Arizona after being passed over for Pittsburgh's job.

Whisenhunt and his top assistant, Russ Grimm, left after the Steelers unexpectedly hired Tomlin, who has done something even Chuck Noll and Bill Cowher couldn't do by taking Pittsburgh to the Super Bowl in his second season.

The Steelers harassed rookie Joe Flacco all game long. Normally unflappable, he looked lost at times and finished 13-for-30 for 141 yards and three costly interceptions.

Roethlisberger, picked off four times by New England in his rookie-year AFC title game, was a steady 16-of-33 for 255 yards and, most importantly, no interceptions. If nothing else, it showed how much experience mattered in a game so important.

After Polamalu's twisting, turning run sealed it with 4:39 to play, the game was held up when Willis McGahee, who scored both Baltimore touchdowns, was carted off the field following a frightening hit to the helmet by Pittsburgh safety Ryan Clark.

The Ravens said he had "significant neck pain," but movement in his arms and legs.

Pittsburgh is heading to its seventh Super Bowl. Only the Steelers, 49ers and Cowboys have won five, and Pittsburgh can be the first to win six. If the Steelers beat Arizona, the 36-year-old Tomlin would be the youngest coach to win an NFL championship.

"They did it tonight the way we've done it all year," Tomlin said. "We've got a very humble group, a very selfless group."

The Steelers proved it is possible to beat a good team three times in a season, and will now face a team they share a history with. They were merged as Card-Pitt during World War II in 1944 when the Cardinals were in Chicago and went 0-10, the only winless team in Steelers history.

Steelers owner Dan Rooney recalls them being nicknamed the Car-Pitts "because everybody walked all over us."

Earlier in the day, before Whisenhunt knew the outcome of the Steelers-Ravens game, he said he wanted to match up against Pittsburgh in the Super Bowl.

"I mean, I'm glad we're playing in it, but the reason I'm here is because of my time with Pittsburgh," Whisenhunt said, "and I am very grateful for that."

Nobody walks over these Steelers, a hard-hitting, tough-guy team with the NFL's best defense, at least statistically, in nearly 20 years. The unit is a worthy descendant of the Steel Curtain teams of the 1970s that virtually defined the way defense is supposed to be played.

They spent the game pressuring Flacco, who tried to become the first rookie to take a team to the Super Bowl. He was outplayed as badly as Roethlisberger was by the Patriots' Tom Brady in his first AFC title game four years ago, and the mismatch at QB may have made the difference.

Down 16-14, Flacco tried to rally the Ravens in the closing minutes. That's when Polamalu stepped in.

"I think Troy was probably just able to read my eyes," Flacco said. "I think he was just able to jump over there, read a little bit and he made a nice play."

Said Roethlisberger: "He went against the No. 1 defense in the world."

Ravens teammate Terrell Suggs said, "I don't think he struggled. They just made plays. When you got a defense that can make plays like that, I don't think he was placing the ball where he wanted to but this was just their night."

Still, Roethlisberger cautioned, "You can't make mistakes and win a big game."

Maybe it helped that the two athletes largely responsible for Pittsburgh's last two major sports championships—former Steelers running back Jerome Bettis and Penguins co-owner and Hall of Famer Mario Lemieux—were among the record crowd of 65,350 in Heinz Field.

The franchise, for all of the success it has enjoyed while playing in a record-tying 14 AFC title games, had lost an unprecedented four of its five most recent conference championship games in Pittsburgh. The run of losses almost made the Steelers glad to go on the road for the entire Super Bowl run-up to their last title.

The Ravens and Steelers own the NFL's nastiest ongoing rivalry. This game was expected to be low-scoring, physical and tense and it was, especially after Baltimore came back from an early 13-0 deficit to get to within 16-14 on McGahee's second short touchdown run of the game, a 1-yarder with 9:32 remaining.

Baltimore won the toss and chose to go on defense, but another such play—Roethlisberger's 45-yard completion to Hines Ward on third-and-12 play—led to the first of Jeff Reed's field goals, a 34-yarder.

On the Ravens' second possession, Flacco made the kind of mistake he didn't make in playoff wins over the Dolphins and top-seeded Titans, throwing the ball into the hands of nickel back Deshea Townsend for the rookie's first interception in 98 passes. Ward kept the ensuing Steelers drive going with an 11-yard catch on third-and-10, leading to Reed's 42-yard field goal, but hurt his knee while landing.

Johnson wins Sony Open for 2nd victory in 6 starts

HONOLULU (AP)—Zach Johnson had a lei around his neck and a glass of champagne in his hand Sunday night as he toasted the members of Waialae after a two-shot victory in the Sony Open.

"The worst part of Hawaii is leaving," he said to laughter and applause.

The best part of winning is he gets to come back.

Johnson closed with a 5-under 65 on Sunday to outlast David Toms in a well-played duel along the back nine, finishing with a two-putt birdie for a two-shot victory over Toms and Adam Scott.

"I get to go back to Maui again," he said, referring to the season-opener at Kapalua for PGA Tour winners. "And Oahu. Starting your year in these two destinations is pretty awesome."

His fifth career victory—and second in his last six starts—can be traced to last week and his tie for sixth. He went 64-67 on the weekend at Kapalua, and made it 30-under par for his last six rounds with his thorough victory at Waialae.

Johnson began the final round with a one-shot lead and never lost it.

"I was hoping to get a victory today, but Zach played awfully well," said Toms, who made three big putts down the stretch to keep himself in the game. "He's a good player and tough to beat."

Tadd Fujikawa, the 18-year-old from Honolulu trying to become the youngest winner in the PGA Tour history, started the final round two shots out of the lead, but never got any closer as he struggled to a 73 and tied for 32nd.

"I just couldn't get anything going," said Fujikawa, who resumes his senior year in high school on Monday.

Johnson finished at 15-under 265, the final birdie eliminating any drama.

Toms, who made a 4-foot birdie putt on the 15th, and par putts from 5 feet and 12 feet on the next two holes, was one shot behind playing the par-5 18th when he tried to cut too much off the corner of the dogleg and wound up in the bunker. There was some question who was away, and it turned out to be Johnson, who hit 5-wood to the back of the green, 35 feet above the hole.

Toms tried to hit a hybrid, but it either caught the lip or came out heavy; either way, it traveled only about 70 yards and left him in such a tough lie in the rough that he couldn't get close for a good look at birdie.

Toms closed with a 66 and tied for second with Scott, who shot 64. Scott left a 10-foot birdie putt short on the 17th, and he knew his birdie on the 18th to finish at 13-under 267 would not be enough.

"It was nice to get on the back nine and have a chance, and get the competitive nerves going again," Scott said. "I really enjoyed that, and I enjoyed the challenge. I wish I could have made the putt on 17 to have a bit of a chance on the last, but all in all, I'm pretty happy with how my game is shaping up."

AP

Zach Johnson holds the winning trophy after winning the Sony Open golf tournament at the Waialae Country Club, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2009, in Honolulu.

Charles Howell III also had a chance, with three straight birdies around the turn and back-to-back birdies late in his round, a chip-in on the 16th and an 18-foot birdie on the 17th. But he missed the 18th green well to the left, chipped to 15 feet and three-putted for bogey to finish alone in fourth.

Fujikawa was feted at every turn, but his hopes faded quickly.

Fans lined the length of the 486-yard opening hole, and a handmade sign hanging from a palm tree behind the green said, "Go Tadd. Bring it Home." It was signed by the grounds crew at Waialae, who stood and cheered.

But after opening with three pars, he began a steady descent down the leaderboard - along with one embarrassing moment.

Standing on the par-3 seventh tee, Fujikawa realized he only had 13 clubs. His caddie left a 6-iron back in the bunker on sixth fairway, and had to run back to retrieve it. Shakil Ahmed got an ovation when he returned to the tee, Fujikawa laughed, but then the kid put his shot into a bunker for another bogey.

He was only three behind when he made birdie at the turn, but each bogey dropped him 10 spots on a crowded leaderboard, ending his chance at winning, and finishing in the top 10 to earn a spot in the FBR Open. Ultimately, it affected the size of his check.

Fujikawa's first PGA Tour paycheck was $29,237, more than doubling his career earnings.

"It was a great week. I learned a lot from it," Fujikawa said. "I qualified, I made the cut, I put myself in contention. If I can keep doing that, everything will work out."

Two groups behind the big crowd, Johnson and Toms were staging a quiet duel.

They traded birdies and bogeys with only about one-fourth the size of the gallery following Fujikawa, and when Toms two-putted for birdie on the ninth, they went to back nine at 11 under. Both made birdie on the 10th, but Johnson pulled ahead with a 5-iron to 4 feet for birdie on the 11th and an 8-footer on the 14th, and Toms never caught up.

Howell, the runner-up to Paul Goydos two years ago, ran off three birdies around the turn to briefly take the lead at 11 under, but he settled into a pars and appeared to be running out of putts until his late flurry. The three-putt only cost him money, for he had to birdie the 18th to have any hope of a playoff.

"I take from it that I gave myself a chance," Howell said. "This is the first week of school. It was nice to get the nerves back and get in a position to win."

Ivanovic, Jankovic and Roddick into 2nd round

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—After struggling in her first match at the Australian Open since losing last year's final, Ana Ivanovic finished with a flourish in a 7-5, 6-3 win over Julia Goerges on Monday.

Fifth-seeded Ivanovic was broken once in each set but fended off five other break points before finishing with consecutive aces against Goerges, a German ranked No. 107 and playing only her fourth major.

Ivanovic lost the 2008 Australian final to Maria Sharapova, who is not defending her title because of an injury, and then won the French Open to move into the No. 1 ranking midway through the year.

But the 21-year-old Serb was bothered by injuries in the middle of the season and her form at the majors waned, going out in the third round at Wimbledon and second round at the U.S. Open.

She and Goerges finished with a combined 66 unforced errors to just 34 winners and were called for several foot faults.

"I took some time to adjust to the rhythm and everything, to slowly get into match," Ivanovic said. "I've never played against her before ... never seen her play. She was hitting the ball very well.

"I don't expect myself to step on the court and play perfect tennis from very first moment. You just want to give yourself the best possible chance and give time to work yourself into the tournament."

Top-ranked Jelena Jankovic, who lost the U.S. Open final to Serena Williams and is yet to win a major title, had an easier time than her fellow Serbian. Jankovic ripped 27 winners against Yvonne Meusburger's four in a 6-1, 6-3 win.

"Today it was so hot, my feet were really burning," said Jankovic, recovering from an illness that caused her to pull out of a Hong Kong tournament this month. "I knew I had to deal with it."

Seventh-seeded Andy Roddick also was impressive in a 6-0, 6-2, 6-2 win over 31-year-old Swedish qualifier Bjorn Rehnquist in the first match at Rod Laver Arena.

The 2003 U.S. Open champion lost only nine points in the first set, sealing it in 28 minutes after setting up triple set point with consecutive aces.

Roddick, a semifinalist in Australia every alternate year since 2003, had 17 winners, nine aces and kept his unforced errors down to 10.

He came into the tournament as runner-up to fourth-ranked Andy Murray at the Qatar Open in Doha and hasn't given up hope of winning a second major, despite the domination of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

"I'm 26, so I'm not quite over the hill," he said. Another Grand Slam title "is what I'm shooting for."

He next plays Belgium's Xavier Malisse, who earned a 7-6 (8), 6-1, 6-1 win over Michael Llodra of France.

Federer, bidding to equal Pete Sampras' record 14 major titles, had a night match later Monday against Andreas Seppi of Italy.

Third-ranked Novak Djokovic, the defending champion, will play Andrea Stoppini in the third match on center court.

Czech Republic's Tomas Berdych, seeded 20th, beat American Robby Ginepri 6-4, 6-4, 6-3. Veteran Dominik Hrbaty, who guided Slovakia to a surprise title at the Hopman Cup international mixed team event in Perth earlier this month, beat John Isner in four sets.

Two other Americans went out in the first round.

Robert Kendrick lost to No. 16 Robin Soderling of Sweden in four sets and Bobby Reynolds went down in straight sets to No. 21 Tommy Robredo of Spain.

Women's No. 7 Vera Zvonareva of Russia posted a 7-6 (2), 6-0 win over Slovakia's Magdalena Rybarikova and No. 15 Alize Cornet of France beat Ukraine's Mariya Koryttseva 6-3, 6-4. No. 16 Marion Bartoli advanced with a 6-2, 6-4 victory over Britain's Melanie South.

Former fourth-ranked Kimiko Date Krumm, returning to the main draw of a major after a 13-year hiatus, was beaten 6-4, 4-6, 8-6 by 25th-seeded Kaia Kanepi of Estonia.

The 38-year-old Japanese player, who came out of retirement last year, had won three matches in qualifying.

Stoudemire, Nash leads Suns over the Raptors

TORONTO (AP)—Amare Stoudemire scored 31 points and Steve Nash had a season-high 18 assists as the Phoenix Suns beat Toronto 117-113 on Sunday for their ninth consecutive victory over the struggling Raptors.

Jason Richardson added 17 points, Shaquille O'Neal and Matt Barnes each had 16 and Leandro Barbosa scored 14 for the Suns.

Anthony Parker led Toronto with 26 points, Joey Graham scored a career-high 22 and Chris Bosh had 20 points and 11 rebounds as the Raptors lost their fifth straight.

A Stoudemire dunk with 3:18 left made it 114-109, but a put-back dunk by Jamario Moon and Parker's layup drew Toronto within a point.

Parker missed a 3-pointer from the top with 37 seconds remaining and Nash converted a driving layup at the other end.

Both Parker and Bosh missed layups on Toronto's final possession and Stoudemire was fouled as he wrapped up the rebound with half a second left.

Heat 104, Thunder 94

At Oklahoma City, Dwyane Wade had 32 points and 10 assists to help Miami beat Oklahoma City and end an extended road trip on a positive note.

Wade went on a scoring flurry early and then came back in to stave off a fourth-quarter rally by the Thunder. He capped the night by methodically taking apart Oklahoma City's defense with a series of passes to his teammates.

Yakhouba Diawara scored 14 points after starting in place of the injured Shawn Marion, and Jamaal Magloire and Mario Chalmers each added 13 points for Miami. Udonis Haslem had 11 points and 15 rebounds.

The Heat finished 4-3 on their 12-day road trip and will host Boston on Wednesday night in their first home game since Jan. 5.

Kevin Durant led Oklahoma City with 31 points, Jeff Green scored 22 and Russell Westbrook added 14 points and eight rebounds.

Hian Choi sets mark for January Ace

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Refaluwasch Golf Association new member Hian Choi topped the club's first tournament of the year besting 24 other participants Saturday at Coral Ocean Point.

Choi shot a net 65 in the RGA January Ace qualifying tournament and could take the first monthly title of the association if his score is unbeaten in the Feb. 1 tournament.

The 20-handicapper Choi fired a 45 on the front and 40 on the back for a gross 85 and a three-stroke win over fellow RGA newcomer Jerry Ayuyu and Carl Hocog.

Ayuyu and Hocog had identical net scores of 68, but the former took the second spot winning in the scorecard tiebreak.

The 18-handicapper Ayuyu drilled a 40 and 46 on the front and back nines, respectively, for a gross 85. On the front nine, he made a net 31.5, beating Hocog's net 32.5.

Hocog, a 13-handicapper, was consistent at the Agingan Point course hitting a 39 on the front and a 40 on the back nine.

Completing the Top 6 and getting cash prizes were Dwaine Stephens (net 69), Asterio Tawanpiy (69), and RGA tournament director Jess Wabol (70).

Stephens defeated Tawanpiy in the tiebreak for fourth place with the former's net 36 on the front nine. The 18-handicapper Stephens tallied a 45 and 42 on the front and back nines, respectively, for a gross 87.

Tawanpiy, a 9-handicapper, shot a 40 in the first nine holes, and improved his performance a bit in the last nine with a 38 for a gross 78. He had a net 36.5 on the front to lose to Stephens in the tiebreak.

The 2-handicapper Wabol recorded the lowest gross of the day with his even par 72 after shooting a 37 on the front and an impressive 1-under par 35 on the back.

RGA's first tournament of the season drew a big field, which included Ben Duenas (net 71), Louis Byun (71), Bae Yoon Man (72), Joe Demapan (73), Bill Kaipat (73), Tars Olopai (74), Ray Tigilao (75), Jordan Kosam (75), Many Mangarero (76), Louie Tilipao (77), Gus Camacho (77), Ulyses Kapileo (78), Tony Satur (79), Joe Lizama 980), Jae Choi (80), Jin Kim (80), Tony Rogolifoi (81), Ed Kapileo (81), Tom Tebuteb (82), Joe Wabol (83), and Bill Limes (90).

Ayuyu and Choi won the closest to the pin contests on hole No. 7 and 14, respectively.

ANGELES

From Page 28

Robert Talavera took the other outright semifinals slot when he finished on top of the 18-man field qualifying roll-offs with his total of 1,859 pinfalls. Talavera bowled in the 200s in six out of the nine games for an impressive 206.56 average.

The other qualifiers in the stepladder finals were the No. 4 ranked Ador Dimaano and No. 5 Percy Omechelang.

Dimaano, who was a finalist in 2007, boosted his chances for a return trip to the finals after slipping past Omechelang in the stepladder finals, 171-169.

The No. 2 Dumapit was paired with Hensley in the other elimination game with the former dethroning the 2007 champion with a 39-8 win in the tiebreak.

Dumapit's next foe was Talavera and the former advanced to the finals with a 180-145 triumph in the semifinals.

Angeles foiled Dimaano's bid for back-to-back finals appearance, as the former youth bowler cruised to a 219-152 victory.

Angeles picked up where he left of, outclassing Dumapit in the championship roll-off to gain his second King of the Lanes title.

Meanwhile, Raymond Zapanta, who missed the cut in the King of the Lanes competition finishing only eighth with his 1,652 pinfalls, went home with an award when SBA honored him for topping the association's ranking points.

Zapanta earned 1,664 points in 2008, besting 23 other male bowlers.

Yho Villavicencio, who lost to Williams in the Queen of the Lanes tournament, two weeks ago, got the most ranking points in 2008 in the women's division with her 740 points.

IGUEL

From Page 28

NMC We Are You tried to take the lead at the top of the seventh inning, but had little chances against DCEPT 6's tight defense. NMC's first two batters flied out and Tenorio was beaten to first base for the third out.

Juan Iguel then led off for DCEPT 6 at the bottom of the sixth and connected on a walkoff homer to wrap up the tournament and clinch back-to-back titles for his team.

Last year, DCEPT 6 defeated Faja in the title showdown winning in Game 2, 16-5. DCEPT 6 earned a twice-to-beat advantage in last year's finals after sweeping its preliminary games. Faja won Game 1, 19-8, to force a deciding Game 2.

This year, DCEPT 6 also had a twice-to-beat advantage in the finals and quickly ended the title showdown with Iguel connecting on the game-winning homer.

Joining Iguel on the winning team were brothers Jesus and Mike, mother and son Nadia and Nokki Saralu, Mel Sakisat, Roy Celis, Bego Camacho, Byron Kaipat, Ben Taisacan, Julian Camacho, and Ben Tagabuel.

DCEPT 6 claimed the first finals ticket after downing UR Ball in the semifinals of the winners' bracket.

UR Ball advanced to the semis after beating NMC We Are you in the quarterfinals. We Are Your dropped to the losers' bracket and had to beat UR Ball in the other semis match to notch the second finals ticket.

Other teams that joined the weekend tournament were FAS, Team Nang, Sakudi, and Goodwill.

Tournament organizer Samantha Salas said they will be holding another tournament next month.

SEDA

From Page 28

SEDA handed out trophies and plaques to individuals and teams that stood out in last season's Masters League, A League, Tuesday B, Thursday B, C League, Ladies, and the Bud Cup.

Oleai swept the Masters League with the Black Stallions finishing first, followed by D'Companeros, and the Heavy Bombers.

The champion team is composed of MVP Jun Olita, Jerry Zapanta, Noel Montalbo, Warlee Ellama, Gerry Galsote, Robert Valdez, and Jun Lapeciros.

The Bombers took the Bud Cup title, while VFW Chubby Wockees claimed the Sportsmanship Award.

In the A League, the Top 3 placers were the Utopia R Corners, D'Pirates Destroyers, and the VFW Major Leaks. Pam Ybanez of the Destroyers notched the MVP honor, while his team topped the Bud Cup. The Vargas Snipers went home with the Sportsmanship trophy.

Tuesday B League had the Krystal 80 Proofers as champions, followed by Jonny's Fujin and Primo's Payday Time. Fujin secured the Bud Cup, while Jonny's Samurai were awarded with the Sportsmanship trophy. Erwin Aragon of the Proofers was adjudged MVP.

Len's Lights Out dominated the Thursday B League defeating runners-up Utopia Hot Shots, Primo's Warriors, and Coral Reef Barracuda.

The Hot Shots' Romuel Chavez secured the MVP plum, while Oleai Get'er Done took the Sportsmanship trophy.

The Top 4 finishers in the C League were Naked Fish Unagas, Coral Reef Barracuda, Naked Fish Hafa Mas, and Jonny's ADH.

Besides winning the championship in the C League, Unagas also notched the Bud Cup. Tito Laniyo of Barracuda was named MVP, while Coral Reef Shark Attack went home with the Sportsmanship Award.

The Naked Fish Naked Shooters topped the Ladies Division, finishing ahead of Oleai D-52's and Coral Reef Sting Rays.

Rufina Guevarra of Oleai won the MVP trophy and her team hoisted the Bud Cup. Coral Reef Mermaids were awarded the Sportsmanship trophy.

Organizers also handed trophies to players who prevailed in the high-in and high-out in various leagues.

A plaque of appreciation was then presented to MARPAC, which was represented by Jojo Camacho and Mel Tenorio at the awards banquet.

Camacho assured SEDA and its players that despite the economic problems we are facing today, MARPAC will continue to support SEDA's tournaments.

PXC

From Page 28

Trench Tech president Cuki Alvarez said Taimanglo will serve as special guest referee and judge for some of the fights for that evening.

Aside from this, Alvarez said Taimanglo will also be the cornerman for up-and-coming PXC welterweight contender and semi main event competitor Hosea Ware from Spike 22 Ground Fu fight Academy.

Ware will be taking on Syl "The Deal" Teregeyo of Team Marianas Elite in a 185-lb. fight.

Taimanglo will also be accompanied in his trip to Saipan by former Universal Reality Combat Championships lightweight champion Justin "The Shocker" Cruz.

"Both of these gentlemen are of Chamorro heritage and are ambassadors of the Marianas in mixed martial arts competitions around the region. Both individuals hold numerous titles/medals in jiu jitsu," said Alvarez.

The Teregeyo-Ware bout will be followed by the main event that will feature Marianas Elite's Maitai 'The Charger" Charley against Ryan "The Dentist" Urquizu of Guam's Fight to Win!.

Other ROP VI bouts are the following:

- Independent's Fiden Teregeyo vs. Team Guam's Ray Apiag in the 145-lb. division;
- Zalaka's Jacob Ilo vs. Trench Tech's Vince Masga in the 140-lb. division;
- Team Haga's Jordan Ogo vs. Pwang's Eddie Paulis in the 125-lb. division;
- Team Haga's Stanley Go vs. Trench Tech's Mark "The Dark" Nuque in the 150-lb. division;
- Team Haga's Daniel Ogo vs. Marianas Elite's Kevin Esteves in the 130-lb. division;
- Team Haga's and John Ogo vs. Trench Tech's Seung Min Lee in the 155-lb. division;
- DAT Gym's E.J. Palacios vs. Marianas Elite's Dino Mettao in the 160-lb. division;
- DAT Gym's Francisco Palacios vs. Marianas Elite's Martin Ayuyu in the 140-lb. division;
- Predator's Joe "Bad Manners" Aldan vs. MTM Guam's Peter Boy Alvarez in the 145-lb. division;
- Pwang's Regal Mality vs. MTM Guam's Robert A. Baza in the 130-lb. division;
- Extreme's Marvin Somol vs. Pwang's Barry Mality in the 120-lb. division;
- Trench Tech USA's Kyle Peterson vs. independent fighter George Cruz in the 190-lb. division; and
- Marianas Elite's Derek "Pinchi" Rangamar vs. Spike 22 Guam's Tony "The Wrech" Reyes in the 190-lb. division.

Tickets for ROP VI: Conviction are now being sold at Boarderline Skate Shop, 670 Rock Steady, Han Nam Market in Koblerville, Kagman Mobil, and Pacific Trading Co. at $20 each.

Main sponsors are Docomo Pacific, Miller Lite, Pepsi, and Monster, Budget Rent A Car, Aquarius Beach Tower, C.K. Beach Club, and 360 Restaurant.

For more information, contact Alvarez at 483-4MMA, 483-4899, and 235-3800.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	33	9	.786	_
Philadelphia	20	20	.500	12
New Jersey	19	22	.463	13 1 / 2
New York	15	24	.385	16 1 / 2
Toronto	16	26	.381	17

Southeast Division

Orlando	33	8	.805	_
Atlanta	23	16	.590	9
Miami	22	18	.550	10 1 / 2
Charlotte	16	24	.400	16 1 / 2
Washington	8	31	.205	24

Central Division

Cleveland	31	7	.816	_
Detroit	22	17	.564	9 1 / 2
Milwaukee	20	23	.465	13 1 / 2
Chicago	18	23	.439	14 1 / 2
Indiana	15	25	.375	17

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	26	13	.667	_
New Orleans	24	13	.649	1
Houston	25	16	.610	2
Dallas	23	17	.575	3 1 / 2
Memphis	11	28	.282	15

Northwest Division

Denver	27	14	.659	_
Portland	24	16	.600	2 1 / 2
Utah	24	17	.585	3
Minnesota	12	26	.316	13 1 / 2
Oklahoma City	8	34	.190	19 1 / 2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	31	8	.795	_
Phoenix	23	15	.605	7 1 / 2
Golden State	12	29	.293	20
Sacramento	10	31	.244	22
L.A. Clippers	9	30	.231	22

Yesterday's Games

Phoenix 117, Toronto 113
Miami 104, Oklahoma City 94

SONY OPEN SCORES

HONOLULU (AP)–Scores Sunday from the final round of the Sony Open, a $5.4 million US PGA Tour event at 7,044-yard, par-70 Waialae Country Club:

FINAL ROUND

Zach Johnson	69-65-66-65	265
Adam Scott	71-66-66-64	267
David Toms	70-66-65-66	267
Charles Howell III	67-68-67-66	268
Kevin Na	72-65-66-66	269
Brian Gay	66-67-68-68	269
Steve Marino	68-67-70-66	271
George McNeill	69-68-65-69	271
Webb Simpson	66-68-70-68	272
Bill Haas	68-71-65-68	272
Boo Weekley	66-69-67-70	272
Tim Clark	71-70-68-64	273
Marc Leishman	72-66-70-65	273
Rory Sabbatini	68-70-70-65	273
Scott Piercy	67-72-69-65	273
K.J. Choi	68-69-70-66	273
Tim Herron	68-71-68-66	273
Bob Estes	72-67-68-66	273
Sean O'Hair	71-68-66-68	273
Jeff Klauk	69-69-66-69	273
Nathan Green	66-66-69-72	273
Shigeki Maruyama	65-68-68-72	273
Jerry Kelly	67-72-69-66	274
Cliff Kresge	69-69-69-67	274
Troy Matteson	71-67-69-67	274
Ryuji Imada	71-70-66-67	274
Chez Reavie	70-70-66-68	274
Luke Donald	67-70-68-69	274
Briny Baird	69-67-69-69	274
Cameron Beckman	72-66-67-69	274
Steve Stricker	70-68-67-69	274
Bart Bryant	71-69-71-64	275
Stewart Cink	71-65-72-67	275
Greg Owen	71-67-70-67	275
Jimmy Walker	73-66-68-68	275
D.J. Trahan	71-67-66-71	275
Geoff Ogilvy	66-69-68-72	275
Tadd Fujikawa	71-69-62-73	275
Scott Sterling	71-69-71-65	276
Hideto Tanihara	72-65-73-66	276
Arron Oberholser	68-73-69-66	276
Ernie Els	72-69-68-67	276
Michael Letzig	69-70-69-68	276
Brendon Todd	69-71-66-70	276
Azuma Yano	71-70-70-66	277
Michael Allen	72-68-70-67	277
Glen Day	70-68-72-67	277
Chris Stroud	67-70-71-69	277
Brian Davis	69-68-68-72	277
Wil Collins	69-67-69-72	277
Alex Cejka	72-69-70-67	278
Ted Purdy	69-69-70-70	278
Tim Wilkinson	68-70-68-72	278
Harrison Frazar	69-70-66-73	278
Steve Lowery	71-68-70-70	279
Casey Wittenberg	71-70-68-70	279
Tommy Gainey	71-70-66-72	279
Kevin Streelman	70-69-67-73	279
Joe Durant	73-68-70-69	280
Richard S. Johnson	70-71-69-70	280
Matt Bettencourt	73-68-69-70	280
David Mathis	68-68-71-73	280
Tom Pernice, Jr.	69-63-75-73	280
Kenny Perry	69-69-68-74	280
Troy Kelly	71-66-75-70	282
Arjun Atwal	69-71-72-70	282
John Merrick	70-70-72-70	282
Jarrod Lyle	70-69-70-73	282
Andres Romero	73-68-71-71	283
Jeff Overton	71-69-71-72	283
Paul Azinger	68-73-71-71	283
Spencer Levin	71-69-70-74	284
Jeff Quinney	71-70-72-72	285
Tag Ridings	71-69-72-73	285
Tim Petrovic	69-72-71-73	285
D.A. Points	68-73-74-71	286
Matthew Borchert	73-67-73-75	288
Junpei Takayama	71-69-74-75	289

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	9	0
Freedom Air	8	1
CPA	8	1
No Zone	8	2
Joeten Motors	7	3
Beach Boys	6	2
Legislature	6	4
Docomo	6	4
DLNR	5	5
DEQ/CRM	5	5
POI	4	4
P & S	4	4
Law & Order	3	6
PSS	3	6
CUC	3	7
CHC	2	6
Customs	2	7
PIC	2	7
Mayors	1	9
Hopwood	0	9

Women's Division

NMC	7	1
DCCA	3	3
Finance	3	4
CUC	3	4
CHC	1	5

2009 Winter Festival of Runs: 10K Race

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The women's top finishers in various age group in the 10K race of the 2009 Winter Festival of Runs pose with Ms. Marianas Sorene A. Maratita, left, and Ms. Teen Marianas Ariel St. Claire.

The men's top finishers in various age group in the 10K race of the 2009 Winter Festival of Runs receive their medals during the awards banquet Saturday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Mariko Hasumi, left, and Yoshiyuki Tokumagu raise their arms as they cross the finish line.

Japanese runners show their certificates after finishing the race.

Saipan's Robert Torres, right, and Lynn Tenorio cross the finish line.

The Jones family, from left, John, Angelo, and Flor, smile for the camera after completing the race.

Karen Klaver, left, and Stan Good enter the American Memorial Park loop.

Top finisher of the 10K Matt Mancao, center, poses with Japan TV talent Erika Okushi, and 2008 Miss Teen Marianas Ariel St. Claire.

Three runners celebrate at the finish line.

Maxi Braig, 617, is ahead of two other runners.

The oldest participant in the 2009 Winter Festival of Runs—88-year-old Yoshio Dejima.

Johnson wins Sony Open for 2nd victory in 6 starts

Zach Johnson had a lei around his neck and a glass of champagne in his hand Sunday night as he toasted the members of Waialae after a two-shot victory in the Sony Open. 25

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Cardinals edge Eagles for NFC title

Down and out for decades, the Arizona Cardinals have turned a bad joke into a Super Bowl-bound team. 24

Angeles regains King of the Lanes title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Raymond Angeles reclaimed the Budweiser King of the Lanes title Sunday to complete Saipan Bowling Association's 2008 royal court.

Angeles, who won the same title in 2006, but failed to defend it in 2007, prevailed in the 2008 season-ending tournament at the Saipan Bowling Center to join Queen of the Lane Emi Williams and Prince Zack Cruz in the winners' cirle.

The three top bowlers were honored in an award banquet at Shirley's Coffee Shop in Susupe with no less than SBA president Jerry Tan handing them their trophies.

Angeles regained the King of the Lanes he lost to Jon Hensley in 2007 after beating Raul Dumapit in the finals, 180-144.

The 20-year-old Angeles was ranked second in the stepladder finals and gained an automatic semis ticket.

Angeles tallied 1,806 pinfalls in the nine-game qualifying roll-offs. He knocked down more than 200 pins in Games 1 (204), 2 (248), 5 (237), and 8 (254) and had an average of 200.67 pinfalls per game.

See ANGELES on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

From left, 2008 Budweiser Queen of the Lanes Emi Williams, King of the Lanes Raymond Angeles, and Bing Prince of the Lanes Zack Cruz pose during the awards banquet for SBA's season-finale roll-offs Sunday at Shirley's Coffee Shop in Susupe.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Oleai Black Stallions claim their championship trophies in the Masters League during the awards banquet for the 2008 season of the Saipan Electronic Darts Association Sunday at Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club.

SEDA recognizes season's finest

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The Saipan Electronic Darts Association capped its 2008 season with an awards banquet held at Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club.

See SEDA on Page 26

PXC champ to appear in ROP VI

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Taimanglo

Pacific Xtreme Combat's undisputed lightweight champion Baby Joe Taimanglo of Guam will make a special guest appearance in Rites of Passage VI: Conviction set this coming Saturday, Jan. 24, at Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall.

See PXC on Page 26

Iguel homer lifts DCEPT 6 to second straight title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

DCEPT 6 topped the Customs Goodwill Slowpitch Softball Tournament for the second straight time after beating NMC We Are You in the finals Sunday at the Dandan Elementary School Ballfield.

Thanks to leftfielder Juan Iguel's solo homer, which allowed DCEPT to pull off a 3-2 triumph in the low-scoring title match

Both teams struggled at-bat with NMC We Are You scoring only one run in the first and another in the sixth. Second baseman Dave Apatang made NMC We Are You's first run on a DCEPT 6 error, while Tyrone Omar scored the second one on a Jess Mesa sacrifice fly.

NMC We Are You shut out DCEPT 6 in the first three innings before Mel Sakisat's single drove Nokki Saralu home and put the eventual two-time champion in the scoreboard.

DCEPT 6 took a 2-1 lead at the bottom of the fifth on leftfielder Ben Taisacan solo home run.

After Omar's run at the top of the sixth tied the game at 2-all, DCEPT 6 failed to regain control of the match at the bottom when NMC We Are You pitcher Shine Tenorio struck out Nadia Saralu, and Ben Tagabuel and Mike Iguel flied out.

See IGUEL on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Members of DCEPT 6 flash the No. 2 sign after ruling the Customs Goodwill Softball Tournament for the second straight time Sunday at the Dandan Elementary School Ballfield.